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'Beauty Girls'

Gendered Subjectivity, Agency and Symbolic Violence in Further Education

'Beauty Girls': Gendered Subjectivity, Agency and Symbolic Violence in Further Education

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A dissertation submitted to University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law

Department of Education

2013

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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Abstract

This thesis is about the cultures, pedagogies and practices of beauty therapy courses, about the young women who undertake those courses, and the complex matrix of social, cultural and dispositional factors which shape their subjectivities and trajectories.

Firstly, it investigates the factors influencing students' decisions to enrol on their courses. Secondly, it investigates how the gendered and classed dispositions they bring to their courses are reinforced, modified or changed by their experiences as beauty therapy students. Lastly, it explores the ways in which these processes might be embedded in different forms of violence connected to beauty practices, interpersonal relationships and education, and to the forms of social and economic injustice that adhere in these.

The research was based on an ethnographic case study of NVQ beauty therapy courses in two English further education colleges. This thesis explores the methodological, epistemological, ethical and political issues involved in the research process, from design and data collection to analysis and interpretation.

The study is situated in radical materialist feminism but also draws particularly on Bourdieu's theory of practice to situate the subjectivities and trajectories of participants and their engagement with beauty practices in the dynamics of agency and structure. Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, and its interrelationships with structural and direct forms of violence, provides a conceptual thread through this thesis linking the themes of vocational education and beauty practices.

In focusing on the under-researched area of beauty therapy training, the thesis contributes to our knowledge about the gendered and classed nature of vocational education. In situating young women's engagement with beauty practices in the context of symbolic and other forms of violence, it also aims to contribute to our understanding of how these practices are implicated in violence against women.

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Acknowledgments

I could not have completed this thesis without the help and generosity of others. I am indebted to the students and tutors who allowed me in to their daily college lives and gave their time and their stories. My sincere thanks to Rosemary Deem who guided and nurtured me as a researcher, and to Harriet Bradley whose guidance, encouragement and humour have also been invaluable. Thanks also to Frances Giampapa for her help in the early stages and to Sally Barnes who pointed me in the right direction five years ago.

Thank you to Al Parken for wisdom born of PhD experience, and to Sarah Minns for dinners and laughter. Thanks are also due to Mary Corcoran for encouraging self-belief, to D. A. Tidy for putting things in perspective, and to Claire Stewart for her help early on in the fieldwork.

I would also like to thank Sarah Wyatt for her constant friendship and belief in this project, and Jane Eccles for the time she generously spent reading chapters and helping me edit them.

I am grateful to Sheila Kidd, Jane Kidd and Liz McKenty for their love and generosity, and to Izzy McKenty for helping me to understand something of what it means to grow up a girl in the early twenty-first century.

Kath Tudor has lived the highs and lows of the doctoral process with me. I am deeply grateful to her for the love, wisdom and support which has sustained and inspired me. I could not have done this without her.

Bunty and Mabel, my constant companions through the writing process, helped in many ways and are pleased the thesis is finally finished.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis is about the cultures, pedagogies and practices of beauty therapy courses and the students who undertake those courses. Based on an ethnographic case study of NVQ[1] beauty therapy training in two Further Education colleges, it explores three key issues. Firstly, it interrogates the social, cultural and dispositional factors influencing young women's decisions to enrol on these courses. Secondly, it investigates how the gendered and classed dispositions that young women bring to their courses are reinforced, modified or changed by their experiences as beauty therapy students. Lastly, it explores the processes involved in shaping the trajectories and subjectivities of 'beauty girls' and how these might be embedded in different forms of violence connected to beauty practices, interpersonal relationships, education, and the forms of social and economic injustice that adhere in these. These concerns are encapsulated in the research questions presented in chapter six.

Why beauty therapy training?

I began working as a lecturer in further education colleges 1991, leaving in 2001 to work in the community sector. In 2006, I returned to FE and to what appeared to be a much changed educational and institutional landscape. In the intervening time, changes that had been initiated in the early 1980s by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government had gathered momentum. The FE world I came back to was bigger (the result of a succession of mergers), more impersonal and increasingly dominated by decision-making processes led by layers of managers. More importantly, from my perspective as a lecturer dedicated to the idea of teaching and learning as a

[1] National Vocational Qualification (see chapter two).

critical, reflective and potentially emancipatory endeavour, this new educational landscape and the curricula associated with it seemed more dominated than ever by what Colley calls “narrow and… behaviourist approaches focused on skills, competences and economic instrumentalism” (Colley, 2006: 26). One of the most obvious changes to the social geography of my college was that the staffroom and some of the classrooms had been converted into beauty or hairdressing salons. There were many more young women, immediately recognizable as beauty therapy or hairdressing students, dressed identically in salon uniforms, wearing immaculately applied make-up and trailing pink ‘kit cases’. Their appearance was in sharp contrast to that of other students, particularly to that of the predominantly male construction and engineering students whose base rooms and workshops were housed in the building next door to the beauty and hair salons. My concern, however, was not just with how this reflected the increasingly powerful ‘skills agenda’ which has reframed education and training in terms of ‘employability’ and economic productivity, but also, as a feminist, with what this overt gender segregation meant in relation to the college’s stated policy commitment to equality. In broader terms, I was also concerned with the role played by the beauty industry in marshalling women into an obsession with appearance. Deciding to undertake a PhD was the product of several factors connected to my personal and employment situation, but the concerns outlined above provided a potential research direction and a catalyst for submitting a proposal. From the outset, therefore, my position has been thoroughly invested in a set of assumptions about what the purpose of education should be and in my feminist political commitments.

After designing my research project and piloting student interview schedules, I spent one academic year with Level 1 and 2 NVQ beauty therapy students and their tutors in two FE colleges in South West England. My ethnographic collective case study employed multiple methods for investigating students’ investments in beauty practices, their decisions to enrol on a beauty course and the effect of these courses on their identities and possible trajectories. I observed lessons in classrooms and teaching salons, talked informally with staff and students, conducted focus groups and

interviewed fourteen students at the beginning of the academic year and thirteen of these again at the end. These I refer to as the 'core group' since their accounts provided most of the data for exploring the research questions, particularly in terms of how the courses shaped their self-perceptions as young women, learners and future workers. These were also the students I had most contact with and who allowed me access to information about multiple aspects of their lives. The group was made up of twelve White and two Black students and all but one came from working class backgrounds. In addition, I interviewed seven tutors who also acted as my 'key informants', facilitating access to students, teaching sessions and information about the courses and broader institutional issues.

Thesis structure, themes and perspectives

My study is situated in the intersection between vocational education and training (VET), beauty practices and the beauty therapy industry. Chapter two places beauty therapy training in the wider context of vocational learning in post-16 further education. It outlines the economic and educational policy trajectories which have shaped this sector in the last three decades and considers the effect of these on vocational provision and practice. Drawing on a range of research and theory I argue that the increasingly individualized and instrumental approaches to learning and educational/occupational 'choice' promoted by these changes retrenches structural inequalities associated with gender and class. Whilst some theorists point to the potential of certain vocational programmes to broaden 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) beyond the confines of gendered and classed stereotypes (Bloomer et al, 2002), a key question here is how far the 'choices' of beauty therapy students and the 'transformations' they undergo whilst on their courses retrench those stereotypes.

This possibility is underscored by feminist work which points to beauty practices and the beauty industry as key sites in the production and regulation of femininity, sexual difference and gendered power relations. Chapter three provides an overview of the

feminist research and theory which illuminates women's lived experience of these practices. I also discuss women's involvement in the contemporary beauty industry, particularly beauty therapy. The students in this study are positioned both as consumers and trainee workers in this context so I focus on what the literature has to say about the role of beauty therapy in shaping the meanings attached to femininity, and the forms of work, particularly 'emotional' and 'aesthetic' labour, involved in being and becoming a beauty therapist. This chapter also explores feminist debates around agency, domination and violence in relation to beauty practices. These themes are analytically central in this thesis and I return to them again in chapters four and five.

Chapter four discusses the theoretical perspectives I have drawn on in order to make sense of participants' 'choices', subjectivities and trajectories. Radical materialist feminism is the political and theoretical springboard for this thesis. It has been instrumental in revealing the categories of gender *and* sex as socially constructed oppositions which both produce and are produced by the social relations of heterosexuality. In this context, the production of gender/sexual difference through beauty (Jeffreys, 2005) and other social and cultural practices simultaneously involves the reproduction of heterosexuality. This is the basis for my use of the term 'heterogender' (Ingraham, 1994), and for my references to '(hetero)sexuality', where the use of 'gender' and 'sexuality'' would otherwise conceal heteronormative assumptions (Jackson, 2006).

Materialist feminist accounts have also stressed the impossibility of understanding the lived experience of gender outside of its intersections with class, 'race' and other axes of inequality (Jackson, 2001; Skeggs, 1997), and the importance of attending to post-structuralist understandings of the subject as an unstable effect of power (Holland et al, 1998; Ramazanoglu & Holland 1999). In the feminist tradition of appropriating theoretical tools from non-feminist frameworks (Moi, 1991), I draw on two other key perspectives. Firstly, in order to theorize the way in which power is implicated in participants' immersion in feminine appearance practices, I make use of Foucault's concepts of 'disciplinary power' (1995) and 'technologies of the self' (1985). However,

because of the problems associated with Foucault's "normatively neutral" conception of power (Fraser, 1989:28) and with the voluntaristic notion of agency contained in his conception of the 'reflexive self', I have tended to center my analysis on feminist readings of Bourdieu's theory of practice. This has allowed me to situate the subjectivities and trajectories of participants, and the pleasures and pains involved in beauty practices, in the interrelationships between agency and structure. Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus', 'field 'and 'capital' allow three important questions to be explored: How do dominant power relations operating in and outside the beauty training salons produce the choices, trajectories and identities of beauty girls? How do beauty girls exercise agency in ways that reproduce their own domination? Within the context of beauty therapy courses, under what conditions is resistant agency possible? One of the key notions underpinning these questions, and one which provides a conceptual thread through this thesis linking the themes of education and beauty practices, is Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence as a 'gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims" (Bourdieu, 2001:2) which works to legitimize "relations of oppression by hiding them under a cloak of nature, benevolence, meritocracy" (Wacquant, 1993:1).

When I started out on this research project, my main intention was to use beauty therapy training as the basis for an empirical exploration of Sheila Jeffrey's (2005) argument, that beauty practices constitute a culturally embedded form of violence against women (Jeffreys, 2005). Though the idea of beauty as violence remains a key concern of my thesis, during the research process it became clear that the harms caused by the 'beauty imperative' (Frost, 2001) and by the ways it is played out on beauty therapy courses, could not be understood in isolation from the other injuries sustained by participants in a range of contexts. Starting from the premise that forms of violence adhere in inequality and injustice when these cause suffering on a social, physical or psychological level (Menjivar, 2008), chapter five lays out the conceptual terrain for understanding beauty girls' trajectories as shaped by symbolic, economic, structural and interpersonal forms of violence in interaction with each other.

Chapter six presents the research questions, discusses their relationship to the literature on education, beauty practices and violence and indicates how this study aims to contribute to knowledge in all three areas. It explores the methodological, epistemological, ethical and political issues involved in the research process from design and data collection to analysis and interpretation. I also discuss the shortcomings of this process and the inevitably partial nature of the knowledge produced through it. However, this chapter also emphasizes the reflexive rigour of my approach and how this has led to what I think is a convincing account of the issues and to the production of a valid piece of feminist research.

The next four chapters explore the accounts of participants in relation to the research questions and the issues and concerns outlined above. Chapter seven addresses the social, cultural and dispositional factors involved in students' post-16 decision-making and explores the way in which they account for their decisions to enrol on a beauty therapy course. Here, I focus particularly on the extent to which they draw on discourses of choice or recognize the role played by external constraints in shaping their trajectories. It explores the pre-dispositions which may have made beauty therapy a 'choosable identity' (Colley, 2006), and points to how symbolic violence may be bound up in this process, producing a 'sense of limits' (Bourdieu, 2010) and obscuring, to greater or lesser extents, the systematic gendered and classed inequalities underpinning post-16 decision making.

Chapter eight interrogates tutors' perceptions of the 'types' of young women who become beauty therapy students. It explores the discourses of 'success', 'failure' and deficit invoked to legitimize a range of institutionalized practices and the heterogendered, classed and racialized meanings which adhere in these. Tutors' accounts also reveal the kinds of pedagogical practices used to reconfigure students' bodily and emotional displays in conformity with the ethos of beauty therapy. I point to the symbolic violence at work in these processes and in the normalizing discourses through which tutors imagine students' futures as low paid workers organizing their lives

around the needs of men and children. Here, I draw attention to the way in which symbolic violence legitimizes gendered and classed structural and economic violence.

Chapter nine explores how participants' sense of themselves as young women, learners and future workers is shaped by the pedagogies, discourses and disciplinary practices of their courses. I investigate the mechanisms through which dispositional change is brought about and the work students are required to do on their bodies and emotional displays in order to become 'the right person for the job'. I also explore the conditions under which some students are able to maintain a critical distance from these practices and the mechanisms of symbolic and structural violence which simultaneously short-circuit resistant agency.

In chapter ten I focus more specifically on the interdependence of different forms of violence in shaping students' trajectories. Here I address some of the forms of symbolic and direct violence involved in childhood and teenage appearance practices, the gendering of post-16 'choices', the institutionalized practices which may lead to self-exclusion from school or from particular types of learning, and in the dispositional and appearance practices engaged in on beauty therapy courses. All these are implicated in producing an embodied 'sense of limits' that ultimately reproduce the structural violence of gendered and classed inequalities.

Finally, in the concluding chapter I summarize the key findings in relation to the research questions and indicate the way in which this study contributes to our knowledge about vocational training, about violence in social life, and about the social implications of beauty practices.

In focusing on the neglected area of beauty therapy training I hope to make a contribution to our knowledge about the gendered and classed nature of vocational education. In situating young women's engagement with beauty practices in the context of symbolic and other forms of violence, I also aim to further illuminate how these practices may be implicated in violence against women.

Chapter Two
Vocational Education and Training in FE and the Reproduction of Gender and Class

Until the collapse of the youth labour market in the late 1970s, the norm was for most young people to make a direct transition from compulsory education to the workplace (Colley et al, 2003). In contrast, 70.6 % of 16-18 year olds were in some form of full-time education or training in 2010 (BIS, 2010). The beauty therapy students in this study were amongst the 41% of these students on government funded further education programmes (Ibid: 2010). Their experiences are clearly shaped by the employment sector to which their courses are connected - the beauty industry - and I address this in more detail in chapter three. However, the learning cultures, curricula and pedagogies of NVQ beauty therapy courses also need to be understood in relation to the historical, economic and social factors which have shaped vocational education and training (VET), and the further education sector in general, over the last three decades.

The purpose of this chapter is firstly to situate beauty therapy training in the wider context of vocational further education, and secondly to critically consider the ideological and structural forces shaping policy and practice in this context. Part one considers the characteristics of further education and the affects of government economic and educational policy on it in the last three decades. In part two, I address the way in which educational policies, shaped by broader neo-liberal economic and social agendas, have given rise to new types of vocational education provision based on reworked definitions of 'skill'. In this section I consider the extent to which these changes have strengthened the traditional hierarchy between vocational and academic qualifications and reproduced social inequalities in education. In part three, I focus down on the discourse and practice of 'learning styles' which is now firmly rooted in

further education, and the way in which this mirrors increasingly individualized and instrumental approaches to education. I compare this to more complex models in which learning is understood as inextricably linked to broader social, cultural and economic processes. In the final part, I explore this idea in relation to educational decision making. Here I outline some of the key approaches to understanding how young people make decisions about transitions from school to further education and work. Here I introduce Bourdieu's concept of habitus and argue that it can be used to illuminate the ways in which 'choice' acts as an unconscious mechanism of social reproduction. However, a model of habitus which emphasizes the flexible nature of dispositions allows us to also consider the conscious and sometimes strategic and 'rational' nature of educational decision-making whilst acknowledging its embeddedness in gendered and classed power relations.

The historical and social context of further education and VET

The Further Education sector in England is characterized by its size and diversity. In 2009/10, the academic year in which my fieldwork was conducted, there were 4,621,3004 learners participating in some form of government further education and 1,094,800 of these were under 19 (BIS, 2011). The bulk of FE provision is delivered in or through FE colleges, although voluntary sector and private training providers are increasingly delivering FE funded programmes. Traditionally, most FE students have undertaken courses designed as a preparation for the workplace. Work-based learning, including Modern Apprenticeships and Entry level programmes for 16-19 year olds accounts for some of this provision (Simmons, 2009) although many vocational students undertake their training in college workshops (for instance, engineering and construction), or in 'realistic work environments' (college-based commercial restaurants, travel and tourism offices and hairdressing and beauty salons). Reflecting the decline of the industrial sector and the rise in the size and profitability of the service sector (Lynch, 2006:6), industrial and manufacturing related courses are increasingly being displaced by training for service industry employment (Fisher & Simmons, 2012).

FE college provision also includes academic programmes including A Levels and Access to HE courses[2].

The origins of FE in the nineteenth century 'mechanics' institutes' and technical training schools (Simmons, 2009), and its more recent history of underfunding and marginalization in comparison to the compulsory and higher education sectors underscores both its traditionally working-class nature and the entrenched lack of parity of esteem, particularly in England, between vocational and academic learning (Fisher & Simmons, 2012). However, against a backdrop of intensified concerns with the UK's economic productivity and competitiveness in an increasingly globalized market place, successive governments over the last three decades have refocused attention on vocational education and training (VET) in FE. The resulting plethora of centrally directed policy initiatives and strategies (Benn & Chitty, 1996) have been heralded as the key to 'up-skilling' the work force, increasing economic competitiveness and promoting 'social inclusion' through the participation of 'non-traditional' learners (Simmons, 2010). There has also been a putative consensus across the political spectrum, and amongst educationalists and policy makers, about the need to tackle the deep seated divide between academic and vocational education. In practice, however, proposals to create a unified system of qualifications to bridge this gap have been resisted by successive governments[3]. This intransigence has been widely seen by educationalists as reinforcing the stigma attached to vocational learning as a route for the 'disaffected' and less able and therefore as reinforcing the inequalities underpinning the English education system (Fisher & Simmons, 2012; Apple, 2001). Whilst the long standing defense of A Levels as the 'gold standard' qualification was challenged under

[2] Since the late 1990s, vocationally oriented foundation degrees have been delivered in many FE colleges in partnership with post-92 universities (Webb et al, 2006). In addition, most FE colleges deliver programmes specifically targeted at young people and adults with learning difficulties as well as collaborative provision with schools for 14-16 year olds deemed to be more suited to 'practical' learning rather than the academic subjects still central to the school curriculum (Fisher & Simmons, 2012).

[3] Most notable were the Conservative administration's rejection of the Dearing Report's (1996) proposals to create a coherent system of post-14 education encompassing academic and vocational learning (Benn & Chitty, 1996), and the New Labour government's rejection of Tomlinson's (2004) proposal to replace GCSEs, A Levels and vocational qualifications with a new four-level modular diploma.

Gordon Brown's premiership by proposals in line with Tomlinson's, these were thwarted by the general election of 2009 and the incoming coalition government [4].

The similarities between Conservative and New Labour policy with respect to vocational education are mirrored in broader continuities in the cross- party commitment to an ideological and economic project rooted in neo-liberalism (Fisher & Simmons: 2012). The dominant consensus since the mid 1990s has lead to the promotion of policies that emphasize "the deregulation of the economy, trade liberalization, the dismantling of the public sector…. and the predominance of the financial sector of the economy over production and commerce" (Vilas, 1996, cited in Hursh, 2005: 4). This agenda underpinned the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) which removed FE colleges from local authority control, and effectively from democratic accountability. Under the process of 'Incorporation', FE became "dominated by quasi-markets and competition engineered and controlled by the state" (Fisher & Simmons, 2012:36). Alongside the constant stream of government imposed initiatives, targets and funding cuts, this major change heralded an era of industrial unrest in FE (Ibid, 2012), continuing job insecurity, increased workloads, and the erosion of pay and conditions (Orr, 2011). Whilst increasingly scarce resources were directed to marketing and PR, funding became dependent on competitive student recruitment and retention and achievement rates. At the heart of the neo-liberal project is the idea that 'employability' and economic productivity should be the central goal of education, displacing traditional liberal-humanist and critical approaches to teaching and learning that emphasize the developmental, social, or emancipatory role of education (Giroux, 2003; Lynch, 2006). The positioning of education as a market commodity like any other is consistent with trends in the development of vocational curricula and with the changing definition of skills on which they are based.

[4] The educational agenda of the current Coalition government, under the auspices of Michael Gove, favours the retrenchment of rigid academic-vocational divisions and increased institutional exclusivity (Fisher & Simmons, 2012).

Skills, competencies and the new vocationalism

Payne traces the shifts in policy discourses surrounding the concept of skills from a focus in the 1950s on analytical capacities, dexterity and technical know-how related to specific occupations to a preoccupation with generic "social and life skills" (Payne, 2000) as a basis for re-constructing the dispositions of young people towards life and work and strengthening their adaptability, versatility and `employability' in a rapidly changing labour market (Payne, 2000):

> By the time Mrs. Thatcher entered office in 1979… `skill' had already begun to be associated with compensatory education and training programmes for disadvantaged youth, aimed at remedying the failures of previous socialization (Ibid:356).

The trajectory of this new 'vocationalism' has been shaped by the notion "that it is possible to identify a series of 'generic, `transferable' competencies capable of being taught and portable across occupations" (Ibid: 356). 'Competence Based Education and Training' (CBET) is based on "what an individual can do rather than what they know" (Fisher & Simmons, 2012:39), on 'performance' rather than knowledge or understanding and is "more a question of transmitting dispositions and attitudes than of giving the knowledge and skills for specific tasks" (Frykholm & Nitzler, cited in Colley et al, 2003). In addition, the emphasis on "'soft', relational skills to effect positive face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with customers and clients" (Payne, 2000: 354) reflects the shift to a service-based economy. These developments can be seen as constituting a particular neo-liberal form of regulation, helping to create the conditions in which young working class people with few or no qualifications are ostensibly 'brought into' the new economy as low paid, semi-skilled workers- in Lash's terms, as the "upgraded working class" (Lash, 1994:130)- by being given the 'skills' necessary for economic productivity and by the incitement to gain qualifications as evidence of self-management and value on the job market (Hursh, 2005). Neo-liberalism, as Olsen

argues, “does indeed demand the constant production of evidence that one is in fact ‘making an enterprise of oneself’ (Olsen, 1996, cited in Apple, 2001: 416).

In this sense, the ‘progressive vocationalism’ (Fisher & Simmons, 2012) associated with neoliberal education policies contains a “hidden curriculum which is an “expression of possessive individualism in market economies” (Moore, 1887, cited in ibid, 2012). Boreham illustrates the determination with which the ‘individualization of occupational competencies’ has been promoted by pointing to the Thatcher government’s directive forbidding FE college lecturers “to attribute unemployment to its economic policy. Instead, lecturers were required to convince their students that their lack of a job was due to deficits in their personal repertoire of skills” (Boreham, 2004:7). Payne points to the duplicity in this agenda by highlighting the way in which the competencies described in new vocational curricula are often at very low levels and “specified in ways that could only be understood as an attempt to create a cheap pool of malleable, submissive, semi-skilled labour” (Payne, 2000:357). He cites examples of written competencies from a qualification in ‘food preparation and service`- “dress correctly”, “maintain clean and tidy work station”, “use appropriate language” (Ibid: 357) – which are not far removed from the ‘learning outcomes’ specified in the NVQ Level 2 Beauty Therapy programme directing students to demonstrate their learning by “ensuring your personal hygiene and appearance meets accepted standards” and “effectively disinfecting your hands prior to treatment” (Hiscock & Lovett, 2009).

CBET is probably most clearly associated with what Hayward (2004) defines as ‘weak’ Vocational Programmes. Unlike the more traditional, ‘stronger’ forms vocational learning, for instance craft apprenticeships (Young, 2011) and qualifications such as BTEC National Diplomas/Certificates which emphasize the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for entry to a broad vocational area, ‘weak’ vocational courses are geared towards the performance of a particular job role and are typically delivered with “fewer resources and less specialized staff” (Hayward, 2004: 13). Included in this

category are General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs)[5]. Moreover, research suggest that many young people take these courses as a 'second chance' after leaving school with few or no qualifications and may actually be seeking a general education rather than training for a specific job (Wahlberg & Glesson, 2004). The same may be true for many of those who find themselves on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses, another type of 'weak' vocational qualification based on workplace competencies. Indeed, NVQs have been a mainstay of FE provision and represent the first incarnation of national attempts to base vocational qualifications on the notion of 'competence' (Young, 2011).

The introduction of NVQs in the mid-1980s began a trend in which the expression of qualifications by written outcomes detached from the process of learning became "an unquestioned element of all vocational qualification reforms since" (Ibid: 260). This model was arguably a reflection of the desire to control both public expenditure and educational institutions (Ibid, 2011) and to define education in terms that were instrumental to the needs of employers and the economy (Fisher & Simmons, 2012). Firstly, as an assessment - led system detached from any particular programme of learning or institution, policy makers saw NVQs as a way of breaking the monopoly of qualification providers like FE colleges and opening " the way for qualifications to be branded by employers as other products 'on the market'" (Young, 2011:261). Secondly, they were seen as a tool for making education providers 'accountable' by providing a basis for comparability and tracking and for establishing a funding mechanism which linked payment to results, in this case, numbers of NVQs delivered (Ibid, 2011). Thirdly, they were seen as cheap method of dealing with the problem of the perceived 'skills deficit'. The original intention was for NVQs to be tools for accrediting existing skills acquired on work placements and to avoid any need for additional resources to be allocated to educational institutions for their delivery. However, widespread reluctance on the part of employers to offer work placements or to be involved in administration

[5] 'Weak' qualifications might also include the now defunct Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs or 'Vocational A Levels'), criticized by the education inspectorate, Ofsted, as being "neither very advanced nor very vocational" (Ofsted, 2004, cited in Hayward, 2004: 13). Hayward argues that Level 3 GVNQs accounted for most of the growth in vocational provision in schools up to the mid 1990s, whilst FE colleges were left to deliver at Level 1 and 2.

and assessment meant that colleges became key providers of NVQs (Ibid, 2011). Lastly, NVQs were legitimized on the basis that they would promote 'social inclusion' by making qualifications accessible to those without prior formal accreditation or access to educational institutions (Fisher & Simmons, 2012).

The idea of vocational training as a solution to social exclusion is one that links administrations from Thatcher to the present coalition government. Under New Labour this was conceptualized in the concept of NEET- young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (Bynner & Parsons, 2002), and in setting targets for decreasing the numbers in this category. However, this rhetorical commitment to equality, as suggested earlier, is belied by the discursive focus on "the working class, rather than capitalist economic relations…. as the problem to be solved" (Fisher & Simmons, 2012:37)[6] and on the characteristics and outcomes of competence –based vocational education and training. The focus of successive governments on 'basic skills' or 'skills for life' as the basis of vocational qualifications perpetuates the idea that they are "inherently inferior to those attained at school or university "(Young, 2000: 263). In addition, it confirms the notion that they are unlikely to lead to progression, an idea consolidated by the focus of the NVQ model on accrediting pre-existing skills and on the mastery of a narrow range of tasks rather than theoretical knowledge (Brockmann et al, 2008). The criticisms leveled at the NVQ system have led to a number of attempts to bolster 'underpinning knowledge and understanding' and to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills. In terms of the former, because 'performance' remains the criteria on which knowledge is judged (by assessors who are not necessarily subject specialists) "it is invariably expressed as a list of topics with no curricular or pedagogic coherence" (Young, 2012: 271). Consequently, what tends to be emphasized is "'knowledge as facts" rather that 'knowledge as understanding" (Ibid:271). In Smithers' view, this makes competence based qualifications ones "that candidates can cope with, rather than ones that increase their skills" (Smithers, 1993, cited in Grugulis, 2002:9).

[6] Hursh suggests that by focusing on educational reform, neo-liberalism is able to divert attention "away from the negative implications of other policies" and to transform the relationship between the individual and society so that in "shifting responsibility for…welfare away from society… to the individual, fewer expect society to provide an adequate education" (Hursh, 2005:5)

Furthermore, the privileging of performance over theory and knowledge is partly the result of "a largely unspoken assumption that understanding was beyond the capabilities of those likely to take such qualifications" (Young, 2012: 277). In the case of literacy, language and numeracy (LLN), programmes are now provided for those without a level 2 qualification (DfES, 2001) and are most often 'embedded' in the delivery of the substantive elements of learning for those on vocational courses. Whilst research suggests that 'embedding' can have positive results where LLN specialists are used as part of a teaching team, restricted funding often means that vocational tutors are left to deliver language and literacy skills alone. A study by Casey et al (2006) found that in these circumstances, vocational students were twice as likely to fail literacy and numeracy tests. As Hayward (2004) points out, for students without these skills there is little chance of progression in terms of either education or employment. What the evidence outlined here suggests is that competence based vocational models have created new barriers to progression and serve to reproduce existing social inequalities.

However, other 'stronger' types of vocational programmes may have far more potential to encourage progression and to 'expand horizons'. Research conducted as part of the 'Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education'[7] project suggests that some courses which have a strong underpinning knowledge base and require academic study, for instance BTEC health studies courses containing a science and social studies components, may be capable of "transforming the aspirations of students into something less tightly bound by classed and gendered values and stereotypes [by prompting] new identifications and aspirations" (Bloomer et al, 2002:16). For instance, Bloomer et al point to the way in which students' definitions of nursing shifted from 'caring practice' to 'science practice'. Whilst this may introduce another set of exclusionary dichotomies, it does suggest that such courses may have a 'transformative potential'. It could also be assumed that introducing care students to areas of social science may have some potential for facilitating access to the conceptual tools needed for critical reflection on the gendered and classed construction of caring labour (Skeggs,

[7] The TLC project which ran from 2001 to 2005 was part of the ESRC funded *Teaching and Learning Research Programme*.

1997). By implication, competence-based courses are by definition limited in the extent to which they are able to encourage this kind of intellectual change and critical insight[8].

The NVQ model has, ironically, proved unpopular with many employers including those in the beauty industry (Black, 2004), in part because they do not address "the depth and breadth of knowledge that is constructed in the workplace" (James, 2006, cited in Young, 2011). In Young's (2011) view, its continued currency amongst policy makers can be understood in terms of their 'cost effectiveness'. This may also explain why they have remained popular with colleges for whom a result-based funding mechanism may provide an incentive for recruiting and retaining 'low achieving' students on 'easy to pass' vocational courses, even in the face of evidence that they offer little prospect of progression to work (Gardiner & Wilson, 2012). This appears to be confirmed by the recent Wolf Report commissioned by Michael Gove which maintains that up to one third of the post -16 cohort in FE "are following low level vocational provision which has little or no labour market value" (Wolf, 2011). Nevertheless, some academics point to examples of NVQs being used by employers in ways that have benefitted low-skilled workers. For instance, Cox (2007) argues that whilst employers have typically used NVQs at Levels 1 to 3 to train employees for lower skilled labour, National Health Service staff have been able to use them as tools for accessing promotion opportunities. In her view, the reason for this is less to do with the qualification itself and more to do with the fact that the NHS has been a relatively well resourced sector with a strong Human Resource Development policy and an organizational commitment to staff progression across traditional occupational boundaries. In comparison, other workplaces are more 'restricted' (Fuller & Unwin, 2004) as learning environments and in these contexts, competence –based qualifications offer little to employees in the way of skills and career development.

[8] As Glesson argues "`skill' had become so watered down that personal effectiveness training for disadvantaged youth offered neither bona fide marketable skills, nor a rigorous general education….that might afford genuine critical insight into the world of work, economy, politics and society" (Gleeson, 1990, cited in Young 2000: 359).

The potential usefulness of NVQs in spite of their ideological underpinnings is echoed in Payne's argument that they can benefit low paid workers in the care sector by recognizing "skill elements in interpersonal care relationships" (Payne, 1999;4). Whilst this may be important in "challenging the exclusions" produced by definitions of 'skill' rooted in male industrial labour (Ibid: 4), his argument ignores the exploitative potential of broadening out the notion of skills to include 'emotional' competencies. Business management theorists have also been keen to recognize emotional skills and competencies as ways of maximizing productivity (Colley, 2006) and as Colley argues, this discourse "constitutes a celebration of emotional labour" [that] resists acknowledging its costs to the employee". (Ibid:17). In chapter three I discuss the issues raised by this in more depth. However, Payne's emphasis on the role of NVQs in the recognition of skills raises an important issue in relation to vocational qualifications in the largely female areas of 'caring' labour and personal service work, including beauty therapy. As Colley's research on CACHE[9] childcare courses suggests, the personal attributes they aim to inculcate are largely hidden beneath a discourse of technical skills and conceptual knowledge. The courses rely on an "unwritten curriculum" of disciplinary practices through which 'suitable' girls are socialized into the work and those deemed unsuitable are 'screened out'. What is being produced here, according to Colley et al, is an orientation to a specific vocation, or being "the right person for the job" (Colley et, 2003: 477), which in the case of nursery nursing emphasizes 'caring for people' and 'caring about people' and a set of gendered characteristics including gentleness, self-denial, sensitivity, and enthusiasm. Even in the case of NVQ beauty therapy in which written competencies are often measures of personal dispositions in relation to appearance and behavior, the 'caring' skills required in this type of work (Black, 2004) are largely absent from the formal 'learning outcomes' (Hiscock & Lovett, 2010).

[9] The Council for Awards in Childcare and Education (CACHE) validates programmes from Level 1 upwards. The Diploma is a recognized qualification for entry into nursery nursing, a registered occupation in the UK. Whilst Colley's (2006) study highlights the hidden curriculum involved in inculcating a gendered vocational habitus into working class girls, the qualification can also open routes to further training in nursing, teaching or social work.

Research using the notion of 'vocational habitus' underscores the way in which official notions of learning as achieving technical skills and behavioural competences fail to recognize learning as always intimately connected to identity. The Transforming Learning Cultures research emphasizes the nature of learning, even on competency based programmes, as a 'process of becoming'. For instance, Colley et al's (2003) case studies of vocational courses in FE colleges draw on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, a key concept in this thesis and one I return to in chapter four, to argue that vocational learning cultures "transform those who enter them" (Ibid: 471) by requiring students to orient themselves to particular dispositions suited to the relevant occupational sectors. Vocational courses build on, reinforce or change the dispositions students bring to their learning and develop a 'practical sense' of how to be' and a 'sensibility' around the "requisite feelings and morals" (Ibid:471) embedded in the particular ethos of a vocational area. In the process of dispositional change, gendered and classed dispositions and inequalities may be reproduced. For instance, they point to the way in which childcare and engineering have two distinct "guiding ideologies of practice" which reflect both 'sides' of the "male-female, rational-emotional hierarchy" (Ibid: 488) Whilst childcare courses emphasize an ideology of "sacrificial femininity", engineering courses stress" logical thinking, technological invention and judgment divorced from the 'human side' of problems" (Ibid:488).

'Types' of students: the discourse of 'learning styles'

In neo-liberal models of education, the detachment of learning from other areas of human experience "in order to render it tangible, observable and measurable" (Bloomer et al, 2002:1) is consistent with a number of theoretical traditions which have developed over the course of the twentieth century. Behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, for example, have supported the idea that individual and 'cultural' differences in the way people learn can be understood in terms of stable personality traits or, more recently, in terms of conscious 'preferences' for particular ways of learning, which can be observed and measured (Reynolds, 1997). This idea gained ascendency in schools, FE and

management education in the 1980s (Ibid, 1997) and resulted in a range of diagnostic tools based on a plethora of often contradictory and contested research largely in the areas of experimental and cognitive psychology (Coffield et al, 2004a). By the mid 2000s the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the government body then funding FE in England and Wales, required all post-16 institutions to undertake pre-programme diagnostic assessments of 'learning styles' for new students with the intention of providing an 'objective' basis on which teachers could develop a range of pedagogies to suit the diverse 'learning attributes' of students (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000).

The notion of learning styles has been subjected to sustained criticism on the grounds that the notion of 'permanent or semi-permanent 'traits' decontextualizes dispositions to learning from the institutionalized power relationships through which they are produced (Bloomer et al, 2002) . The emphasis on the psychology of learning has meant that the complexities of social class, gender and ethnicity are obscured or denied and "political concerns are translated into scientific" and technical problems (Popkewitz, 1988, cited in Reynolds, 1997:124). For instance divisions made by the Kolb[10] inventory between those who learn from 'concrete experience' (practical learning) and those who favour 'abstract conceptualization' is ostensibly a neutral categorization although it mirrors the classed divisions between practical and academic education. If working class students are more likely to value practical aspects of the curriculum, it is arguably because of they are aware of the high probability of ending up in jobs requiring practical skills rather than conceptual or academic skills (Willis, 1977; Skeggs, 1997; Bourdieu, 2010)[11].

One of the difficulties involved in challenging the learning styles agenda in the context of FE and is that for practitioners it can appear to offer a concrete way of addressing the seemingly worthy causes of 'diversity and difference' in the classroom, 'meeting needs'

[10] The Kolb Learning Style Inventory was developed by David A. Kolb and is based on the idea of 'experiential learning'. It is ostensibly designed to help individuals identify the way they learn from experience (Kolb, 1984).

[11] Skeggs (1997), for instance, argues that the working class students in her study aligned themselves with the practical side of their care course because this confirmed their vocational aspirations and identities as 'caring' people in a way that the academic side did not.

and encouraging the participation of the least 'academic' learners[12]. Research on learning styles has been used to support the idea that women and men typically have different ways of learning. For instance, Philbin et al (1995), using the Kolb inventory, conducted research which supports earlier findings using the same scale (Belenky, 1986, cited in Ibid, 1995) that women are 'accommodators', learning from practical, hands-on experience, whilst men are 'assimilators' with a tendency to abstract conceptualization. Whilst they argue that women are disadvantaged because 'male styles' are positioned as the norm, their argument relies on essentialized, or at least normative, understandings of gender difference and excludes an analysis of how these differences might be produced in the context of gendered power relations. In contrast, other research points to the way in which psychologized approaches which decontextualize learning from its social context can reinforce the kinds of "crude human stereotypes" which have otherwise been delegitimized by "moral and legal process" (Bloomer et al, 2002:2) in the mid to late 20th century[13]. More recent UK-based research has explored how relationships to learning are shaped by complex situational, cultural, social and economic factors. The kinds of 'learning identities' which these factors produce are more usefully thought of as socially grounded dispositions (Hodkinson et al, 2007) which can only be understood in the context of learners' social positions in relation to gender, class and 'race' in specific historical and institutional contexts. For example, some research has focused how the marketization of further and higher education and its effects on funding and management practices have a differential impact on young people's relationship to education and their longer term life

[12] For institutions, the attraction of learning styles may also due to its compatibility with "the machinery of measurement and credentialism" (Reynolds, 1997:125) at the heart of the 'skills agenda'.

[13] For instance, a project undertaken by a group of teachers in the US was designed to address the widespread assumption that Native American children are 'field-dependent' and 'non-analytical' learners and 'doers' rather than 'talkers' (McCarty et al, 1991, cited in Renold, 1997), distinctions reminiscent of the vocational-academic divide in the UK. Through an enquiry- based programme aimed at developing "concepts, ideas and problem solving abilities in the context of culturally relevant experiences and topics" (Ibid: 60) the researchers showed that a group of Navajo children were willing to use analytical skills, to engage in discussion, and to carry their responsiveness into other learning activities. McCarty et al concluded that understanding how this particular group of students learn requires "a more complex analysis of the relationship between pedagogy, learner characteristics and classroom interaction than is afforded by conventional categorizations of "learning styles" according to analytical versus holistic or verbal versus non-verbal performances (Ibid:50).

chances (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Ainley & Bailey, 1997). Other work suggests that gender and/or class in an increasingly competitive and individualized education system shapes people's experiences of 'success' and 'failure' in school, further, and higher education (Walkerdine et al, 2001; Lehmann, 2009). This research underscores the way in which learning, far from being a product of stable individual traits, is shaped by 'dispositions' and 'positions' which may change over time and from context to context (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000). As Hodkinson et al argue:

> …learning may be understood as one way in which dispositional change occurs. However, changing or unchanging, the inherently social nature of being human is significant for learning (Hodkinson et al, 2007: 417).

The idea that learning cannot be separated from its context is one now widely accepted by educational theorists. However, what may be less obvious are the implications of this for understanding the relationship between agency and social structure in relation to education. Hodkinson et al argue that whilst social structures and systems bear down on individuals they also, produce and "operate through the person" so that:

> …people are subject to structures even as they take agentic actions, and that any such agentic actions contribute to the on- going development/change/reinforcement of the social structures that are part of them, and part of the social settings where they live their lives (Ibid: 418).

This clearly has implications for understanding how young people 'navigate' through their 'learning careers' (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2002) and how they make their post -16 'choices'.

Understanding Post-16 'choices'

The imposition of market ideologies on education is linked to the discourse of 'choice', constituting students and parents as free consumers of education (Ball, 1993) and as 'reflexive choosers' using education as a root to self-production and 'capital accumulation'. In this section I explore how this discourse reproduces structural inequalities and how it obscures the complexities and social embeddedness of educational decision-making.

Hodkinson et al's view of structure and agency as having an integrated, dialectical relationship to each other is influenced by Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', a central element in his theory of social practice, discussed further in chapter four. Though habitus is given a range of subtly different meanings throughout Bourdieu's work (Jenkins, 1992), it relates to the 'dispositions' or mental structures through which social agents apprehend the world and which are "essentially a product of the internalization of that world" (Bourdieu, 1990, cited in Hatcher, 1998:18). Because agency is an expression of these dispositions, it tends (though is not deterministically programmed) towards conformity to the terms of the dominant social order. The internalization of social structure in the form of dispositions "is not just manifest in behavior, it is an integral part of it" (Jenkins, 1992:75) and "prompts us to act in certain ways without having to go through the mechanism of conscious thought or rational decision making" (Chambers, 2005:331). Bourdieu's model is one that emphasizes the dialectical relationship between habitus as the internalization of class cultures and hierarchy and the education system which selects and filters students. Together these work to reproduce middle class advantage and working class disadvantage (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 2010). In his later work on masculine domination, Bourdieu also argues that girls are guided towards certain subjects and careers both because of objective constraints on their 'choices' and because of the way in which women internalize the gendered symbolic order so that their habitus will 'guide' them towards normatively feminine options. Where both class and gender and concerned:

> Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits. A 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded (Bourdieu, 2010:473).

The extent to which people have a 'feel for the game' of education as a transmitter of class and gender privilege is informed by the unequal distribution of economic, social and, most importantly, cultural capital (resources). The latter is 'inherited' from the family through childhood socialization and relates to familiarity with dominant cultural norms (those that inform the education system, school curricula and so on), language use, values and motivations, and is internalized as dispositions of habitus. Middle class people typically follow a trajectory from A Levels to university not because they have made a conscious strategic calculation about the best way to maximize longer term gains, but because their social position gives them access to greater amounts of valued cultural capital and disposes them towards a 'practical sense' which guides their actions "without rational computation and without the conscious positing of ends" (Bourdieu, 1990, cited in Hatcher, 1998:18)[14]:

This model can be used to explain why working class students with similar academic ability to their middle class peers are more likely to follow a vocational rather than academic route through post-16 education (Roberts, 1993) or why, in spite of the rising levels of post-16 participation in education, low achieving young people from middle class backgrounds are more likely to remain in full time education than those from working class backgrounds (Croll, 2009)[15]. However, Bourdieu's model has been criticized as over-deterministic in that its focus on reproduction appears to cancel out the possibility of social change. It has also been seen as incomplete in its failure to

[14] Bourdieu argues that "…one of the privileges of the dominant, who move in their world as fish in water, resides in the fact that they need not engage in rational computation in order to reach the goals that best suit their interests. All they have to do is follow their dispositions which, being adjusted to their positions, 'naturally' generate practices adjusted to their situation (Bourdieu, 1990, cited in Hatcher, 1998:18).

[15] Bourdieu's model may also explain why, even when 'objective' measures of 'ability' are held constant, middle class pupils are more likely than those from working class backgrounds to elect to study 'prestigious' subjects like modern languages or science (Coxford, 1994).

recognize the ways in which “deliberate, knowing decision-making, informed by whatever rationality is the order of the day” (Jenkins, 1992: 97) may co-exist with ‘choices’ made in more unplanned and ‘intuitive’ ways. However, if it is one-sided it is certainly no more so than the model proposed by sociological Rational Action Theory which presents a radical challenge to cultural reproduction explanations.

Following Boudon (1974), a number of theorists have used RAT to explain class differences in educational decision –making beyond the ‘primary effects’ of socially produced differences in ‘academic ability’. In this model, decisions are based on conscious calculations of the “costs, benefits and probabilities of success” (Hatcher, 1998:10) attached to available options. Working class people do not de-select themselves from higher education or from academic courses because they value education less, but because class position, defined in relation to economic resources, means that their cost-benefit evaluations are of necessity different to those of middle class people. For instance Goldthorpe (1996), Breen (1997) and Erikson & Jonsson (1996) argue that rational choice is based on a mechanism of ‘relative risk aversion’ in which “the most important goal…is to avoid downward mobility” (Werfhorst & Hofstede, 2007:392). On this basis, an individual will tend to strive for a level of attainment that allows them to maintain an educational and social position comparable to that of their parents. Middle class people are more likely to follow a route from school to university because they need more education to achieve the goal of maintaining their class position. One implication of this model is that children from working class backgrounds have to be more ambitious than middle class children in order to achieve upward social mobility through higher education (Ibid, 2007), and the costs of a failed attempt at university will be relatively greater (Goldthorpe, 1996). In addition, working class students and their families may make strategic decisions to take vocational courses because “they offer the best protection against relegation to the ranks of unskilled labour or the unemployed” (Hatcher, 1998:11). This model, however, does not explain why some working class students may also aspire to middle class destinations (Riseborough, 1993, Mirza, 1992).

Other studies have also applied variations of RAT to the relationship between gender and educational choice. Jonsson's (1999) study of gender segregation in subject choice in Sweden uses a 'weaker', less narrowly economistic model of rational choice but she argues that girls and boys choose gender-typical subjects at university level on the basis of rational calculations of optimal utility. Gendered subject preferences, and thus the horizontal segregation of labour markets, is explained as the outcome of the relatively high costs and risks (discrimination, lower probability of success and employment) associated with gender a-typical 'choices'[16].

Other approaches which assume that choices involve a high degree of technical rationality are less concerned with social structure and more focused on the idea that decision making is essentially an individual process. For instance, careers guidance in the UK has historically drawn on trait theory (the idea that good career decisions involve matching personal 'skills' or interests to jobs), developmental models and 'social learning theory', all of which rely on the idea that choice is, or should be, controlled by individuals themselves and that it is, or should be, based on rational processes. In other words, they "[a]ll present a model of planned decision-making as the realistic ideal to be worked towards" (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997:32). Colley and Hodkinson's (2001) analysis of New Labour's 'Bridging the Gap' policy on young people and social exclusion shows how those who do not match up to this model of the ideal, reflexive 'chooser' have been demonized through a discourse which locates the causes of social exclusion in faulty attitudes, wrong choices and other personal (though implicitly classed) deficits. The solution to the problems identified in this document was the provision of personal life and career advice and guidance through the Connexions

[16] Jonsson suggests that the gender segregation determined by 'rational choice' is not a matter of vertical gender inequality. However, this misses the way in which 'choices', made on whatever basis, are shaped by structural power relations, and also disconnects the notion of 'rational choice' from its social and historical context in which rationality has been constructed as an expression of masculinity and defined against femininity and other subjectivities marginalized by class and race (see chapter three). In this sense, Jonsson underplays the way in which 'rationality' has been used to legitimize for gender segregation in the public and private spheres in the first place and how its assumed use in educational decision retrenches gendered inequalities in pay and status in the labour market.

service[17]. This was an attempt, Colley & Hodkinson argue, to "address deep seated problems through a strongly individualistic agency approach" (Ibid:14). In practice, the Connexions service has suffered from underfunding and lack of cooperation between schools and other agencies (Hoggarth et al, 2004). However, as Colley suggests, it the individualistic model of decision –making on which careers advice and guidance is based that makes it inadequate for the needs of young people because:

> It fails to acknowledge the functioning of deep-rooted, structural factors in society, such as class, race, and gender, which profoundly affect young people's life chances….While stigmatizing whole communities, it neglects issues such as the unequal operation of cultural capital…. although this has been shown to influence children's allocation to better or worse-performing schools… as well as post-16 transitions (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001: 8).

In addition current advice and guidance provision does not provide a context in which young people can critically reflect on social pressures guiding them towards particular courses (Colley, 2006). Beck & Fuller et al's (2006b) research on the gendered and racialized nature of apprenticeships, education and work found that young people receive very little practical information and advice to help them make transitions. This, they argue has particular implications for young women who are concentrated in apprenticeships in low-pay sectors with fewer opportunities for progression. Like Colley, they suggest that what is also missing from advice and guidance provision is the opportunity to engage in critical debate about the reasons and consequences of gender, class and ethnic stereotyping.

Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) suggest that dominant models of decision-making in careers advice provision are likely to have limited success when they are applied to policy because they bear little relation to the ways in which educational and career decisions are actually made. They argue instead for a model which recognizes

[17] The Connexions Service was launched in 2001 "with the aim of helping young people make informed choices and so aid a successful transition to adult life" (Hogarth et al, 2004).

individual agency but which contextualizes it in relation to the social, cultural and economic factors through which individual trajectories are produced. Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a bridge between agency and structure is, they argue, the most useful tool for developing such a model. Indeed, as suggested above, it forms a key part of the theoretical underpinnings of much subsequent work on young people's experience of education and 'learning cultures' (Bloomer et al, 2002; Hodkinson et al, 2007; 2008 Colley, 2003; 2006, Colley et al, 2003). In this context, how young people make educational and life transitions can be seen in a much broader context, influenced by gendered and classed dispositions, the opportunity structures of the labour market, family and friendship networks and the inequalities built into the education system. On this view, habitus does not determine trajectories in a mechanistic way but is a 'filtering' mechanism (Hodkinson, 1995) for social experiences, producing subjective 'horizons for action' which can both limit or enable life chances. Habitus is produced, reproduced or, potentially, modified by social experience (Hodkinson, 1995) in a way that is consistent with Bourdieu's claim that it is a 'transposable' source of strategies allowing individuals to generate an 'infinite range' of practices to suit specific situations (Bourdieu, 1977). Far from implying a voluntaristic view of agency, however, habitus is always constrained by the conditions of its production. For example, whilst engineering jobs may be formally open to girls this is an irrelevancy if they do not perceive this route as appropriate (as consistent with habitus) (Hodkinson, 1995). A considerable body of research now points to the way in which gender in intersection with class shapes girls and boys dispositions in both vocational and academic terms with girls often aspiring to service or care related work from hairdressing to social work and nursing, and boys expressing a preference for technical jobs or professions (Furlong & Biggert, 1999). In spite of the ubiquitous discourse of equal opportunities, continuities in the way in which traditional gender stereotypes inform educational and occupational destinations is also demonstrated in research by Miller and Hayward (2006) and Fuller et al (2005). Beck et al (2006a; 2006b) focus on the perceived risks involved in crossing gender boundaries in apprenticeships including 'not fitting in', being harassed or teased, having sexuality questioned. However, some girls do elect, or aspire, to follow gender a-typical career routes. This suggests that any useful model of decision-making must take account of

the ways in which dispositions are produced and the conditions under which they might be changed or modified (Hodkinson, 1995), and under which resistant agency might be possible.

Young people's 'horizons for action' may allow them to engage in forms of 'rational' decision making, though research using this expanded model suggests that this is not the technical rationality proposed by RAT but rather a 'pragmatic rationality' which may be instrumental but always related to family and cultural background. Decisions may be opportunistic, based on partial knowledge and information from an individual's local contexts. They may be 'partially rational' (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 2006) in the sense that decisions are never disconnected from feelings. In addition, as far as educational 'choices' are informed by particular subject or vocational 'interests', these are embodied as part of identity. Vocational 'choices' are 'choosable identities', predispositions rooted in an individual's gendered and classed experiences (Colley, 2003) and "intimately linked to the economic, political and ideological trajectories of their families and communities" (Ball et al, 2000:9, Walkerdine et al, 2001). Habitus, as Reay argues, always "holds powerful structural influences within its frame" (Reay, 1995, cited in Colley, 2006:29). Those with most cultural, economic and social capital are more likely to be able to engage in, or appear to engage in, strategic forms of 'career planning' or 'reflexive decision-making'. Those with least may be severely limited in their ability to construct 'choice biographies' (Du Bois- Raymond,1998). As Ball et al argue "reflexivity will get you only so far if you leave school without qualifications" (Ball et al, 2000:22). However, in a cultural context in which individual rights are ostensibly 'balanced' by a moral obligation to plan and control one's life[18], failure becomes an indication of 'poor choices' and individual inadequacy. Being "forced to negotiate lifestyle choices" without the resources to do so (Ibid: 22) is the condition of those that Lash calls 'reflexive losers' (Lash, 1994). These are the young people who Du Bois- Reymond characterizes as 'the undecided' (1998), those with limited 'horizons for action' whose post-16 trajectories

[18] The discourse of' 'rights and responsibilities' was at the centre of New Labour's ideological trajectory and continues to inform the rhetoric and policies of subsequent administrations. See Tony Blair's article which formed the basis of the Queen's Speech in 2002 (The Observer, Sunday 10th November, 2002).

are more likely to be shaped by temporary or arbitrary decisions, or by 'localism', 'drift' or 'fatalism' (Ball et al, 2000). However, these characterizations also run the risk of reinforcing the discourse of deficit and of misreading the responses of those positioned outside of the 'learning society' as maladaptations rather than expressions of frustration or resistance (Skeggs, 1997). Reay & Ball (1997), for instance, argue that when working class parents prioritize the happiness of their children over considerations of longer term educational attainment they are making a 'rational' response to their own experiences of educational 'failure'. In keeping with RAT, they can also be seen as refusing to engage in the kinds of strategic 'choice games' which are understood in terms of middle class norms, and which they expect to lose.

What is clear, however, is that post-16 progression routes cannot be simply be seen in terms of 'choice' and 'rational planning' (Bloomer et al, 2002). As Bloomer et al argue of young people's transitions:

> In so far as they are choices or decisions at all, they are very heavily constrained choices and decisions. The idealized rational planning agent….which provides the platform for public policy is little more than a figment of the imagination (Ibid: 8).

However, some research suggests that the rhetoric of choice is increasingly emphasized in young people's narratives about their lives (Baker, 2009; Rich, 2005; Wakerdine, 2003; Brannen & Nilsen, 2005). Brannen and Nilsen, for example, argue that in these narratives "the structural side of life… is more often expressed in the silences which punctuate narratives" (Ibid: 2005:423), or in the tensions between claims to autonomous selfhood and the (partial) recognition of gendered and classed dynamics around which this self is 'negotiated' (Rich, 2005). In this sense, late modernity revolves around an 'epistemological fallacy' in which social structures, whilst continuing to shape and predict life chances, have "become more obscure as collectivist traditions. Therefore people come to think of the social world as unpredictable, filled with risk which can only be negotiated on an individual level" (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997:5)

Conclusion

The changes in further education and the vocational curricula in England since the 1980s are a consequence of broader social and economic processes including global economic restructuring and neo-liberal economic and educational policies. It is in this context that qualifications based on traditional conceptions of skill as technical ability underpinned by knowledge and theory have been displaced by qualifications based on the notion of generic, measurable competencies, often conflated with the personal, behavioural characteristics required of low status workers in the new economy. The stress on dispositions rather than technical skills and knowledge may have a particular significance for women training for work in 'caring' and service occupations, including beauty therapy. In this context, competence-based qualifications may highlight some of the lower level skills involved in interpersonal, 'emotional' forms of labour, but in so doing they may also normalize and obscure the gendered and classed nature of this work, reinforcing its low status and normalizing the potential harm involved for workers undertaking 'emotional labour', an issue I return to in chapter three.

Some 'stronger' vocational qualifications, however, retain more traditional notions of skill and may offer more 'transformative' learning experiences which may have the potential to challenge class and gender stereotypes in the construction of 'vocational identities'. By implication, competence-based courses are unlikely to offer the same opportunities for critical reflection. The reproduction of social inequalities through such courses, and through the entrenchment of the academic/vocational divide, belies the ubiquitous discourse of inclusion and equality in the educational policies of successive governments, a rhetoric that has also found its way into pedagogic practice through the notion of 'learning styles' which require teachers to identify and cater for individualized 'traits' or preferences in classroom delivery in order to ensure 'inclusivity'. However, in keeping with other individualized discourses, the concept of learning styles decontextualizes individual dispositions from the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced and obscures structural and political nature of educational differences and inequalities.

Individualized models of behavior also inform dominant discourses about how young people make, or should make, life decisions. Voluntaristic notions of agency are embedded in careers advice and guidance policy and provision and ignore the structural factors shaping and constraining 'choice'. Whilst young people's 'choices' do not always reproduce their disadvantage in any straightforward way, the most useful approach to understanding post-16 decision-making is one that emphasizes the dialectical relationship between agency and structure. Bourdieu's notion of Habitus is of key importance here. Whilst it can imply the inevitability of 'choice' as a mechanism of unconscious social reproduction, when habitus is understood as a 'transposable' source of strategies which may allow for conscious as well as unconscious action, it can be used as a tool for exploring the complexity of post-16 decision making. Whilst an individual's 'choices' may be guided by gendered and classed dispositions sedimented in childhood or through prior educational experience, habitus can also incorporate the schematic repertoire necessary for types of 'rational' calculation, though this is always informed by access to information, family and cultural backgrounds, labour market opportunity structures and 'learning identities'.

In chapter three I turn my attention to beauty practices and the beauty industry as the other key area influencing the trajectories of the young women in this study. In the course of reviewing the empirical and theoretical literature connected to beauty, I revisit several of themes emerging from the above discussion: the significance of skills and 'emotional' labour in the context of beauty therapy; individualized notions of reflexive self-production in the context of women's relationships to their bodies; the significance of discourses of choice and agency in feminist debates about beauty practices.

Chapter Three

Beauty Practices and the Beauty Therapy Industry: Sexual Difference, Domination and Agency

Young women's decisions to enrol on beauty therapy courses and their experiences on those courses are inevitably bound up with beauty as a cultural practice associated with historically and culturally specific constructions of heterosexual femininity. To explore this, I draw on an international body of feminist work which, since the 1970s, has addressed the effect of the feminine appearance practices on women, gender relations and constructions of class and 'race'. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of some the key issues arising from this field with a particular focus on questions of sexual difference, agency, pleasure, domination and harm/violence. I present a largely descriptive account of how these issues have been debated in empirical and theoretical work on beauty, with the intention of subjecting them to a more theoretical exploration in chapters four and five.

Part one addresses the idea that feminine appearance practices of all kinds produce and reproduce gender/sexual difference, structural inequalities and physical or psychological harms. I argue that women's involvement in 'beauty culture' cannot be understood simply as an exercise of choice in the pursuit of 'pleasure' or identity as has been suggested by some research, although these responses are centrally important in understanding the relationship between beauty and domination. In part two, I consider feminist research and theory which has focused on how women's engagement with beauty practices is shaped by their social locations in relation to class, 'race' and age as well as gender. I also discuss the historical specificity of 'beauty' and the significance of appearance practices in the context of contemporary consumer capitalism. In the final section I discuss the contemporary beauty therapy industry, drawing on research which has addressed women's involvement in this as clients and workers. Because the

participants in this study are both consumers of beauty and potential workers in the industry, I focus on what the literature tells us about how beauty therapy shapes the meanings attached to femininity and appearance, and the forms of work, specifically 'emotional' and 'aesthetic' labour, involved in being a beauty therapist.

Beauty, Sexual difference, Power and Agency

One of the of the key questions in feminist debates on beauty practices is whether they function to control, repress or disguise a 'natural' female body or to create the illusion of an absolute and universal difference between men and women. The question is underpinned by different approaches to the relationship between 'sex', usually referring to biological differences, and 'gender', usually referring to socially constructed characteristics (Oakley, 1972). Within the feminist literature, two main ways of understanding this relationship have been incorporated into analyses of beauty. The first of these understands sex and gender to be related but distinct categories. This assumption informs Wendy Chapkis' (1986) empirical study of the 'politics of appearance'[19] in which beauty practices are seen as part of 'the sex-gender system", a concept used by Gail Rubin (1975) to refer to the social arrangements by which biological sex is transformed into the social hierarchy of gender. Chapkis extends this concept to include the process by which women and men are obliged to alter appearance to more closely approximate social definitions of femininity or masculinity. In discussing the processes through which women are expected to create an image of 'natural' femininity through cosmetics and beauty regimes she argues that:

Despite the fact that each woman knows her own belabored transformation from female to feminine is artificial, she harbors the secret conviction that it should be effortless (Chapkis, 1986: 5).

[19] Chapkis' work frames beauty in social and political terms arguing that the Western cosmetics industry, advertising and the communications media creates a model of feminine beauty which becomes mandatory for all women.

This idea resonates with other contemporary and later analyses of how the labour involved in producing feminine beauty must simultaneously be denied in order to sustain the idea of gender as a natural category. However, Chapkis' work is underpinned by the assumption that there is an imminent 'femaleness' which is covered-up by the disguise of beauty. The problem for feminism is how to make visible and celebrate women's selves and bodies 'as they really are'. Her model of the relationship between sex and gender can be seen, using Nicholson's analogy, as a 'coat rack' where biological sex serves as the frame on which historically and culturally specific definitions of gender are hung (Nicholson, 1994: 81). The idea that the sexed body has an a priori existence independently of gender relies on the assumption that definitions of maleness and femaleness are universally agreed and unproblematic. This is suggestive of the dangers of exposing gender as a social construction whilst leaving sexual difference to the realm of biology:

> We cannot look to the body to ground cross cultural claims about the male/female distinction…differences go 'all the way down'…tied not just to the limited phenomenon many of us associate with gender … but also to a culturally various understandings of the body, and to what it means to be a woman and a man (Nicholson, 1994:83).

Joan Scott argues that whilst gender might be "the social organization of sexual difference", this does not mean that it "reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men". (Scott, 1988, cited in Nicolson, 1994: 79). Indeed, it is impossible to understand sexual differences outside out historically and culturally constructed discourses about the body.

One of the important aspects of 'beauty practices is that they act not just to veil the 'real' woman beneath the 'masquerade', but also to create the idea of real and absolute physical differences between men and women; to create women and men as universal givens. Judith Butler (1990) argues that once we have established this, sex itself becomes a gendered category and neither sex nor gender can be seen as constituting

any prediscursive substance. The cultural production of sex conceals "the very operation of [its] discursive production" (Ibid, 1990:7). It also conceals the power relations and interests at work in producing the idea of women and men as the basis of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1986). This idea is reflected in the work of French radical materialist feminists which has denaturalized this difference, uncovering its social and political nature. Monique Wittig, for example, argues that "'man' and 'woman' are political concepts of opposition" (Wittig, 1988a:436) which both create heterosexuality and are created by it, and that "(T)he function of difference is to mask at every level the conflicts of interest (between men and women), including ideological ones" (Ibid, 1988a: 436)[20]. Moreover, from Wittig's perspective, women are not just a category of sex marked as different from men, but are defined as 'sex itself':

> The category of sex is the product of heterosexual society that turns half of its population into sexual beings. Whatever they are, whatever they do… they are seen and made sexually available to men, and they, breasts, buttocks, costume, must be visible. They must wear their yellow star, their constant smile, day and night" (Wittig, 2005:22).

Sheila Jeffreys (2005) argues that in order for sexual difference to appear natural women must both learn to 'do' femininity and internalize it through routinely engaging in appearance related practices. In this process, girls make the transition from a condition of physical strength and self-confidence to one of self-consciousness and bodily constraint [21]. From the perspective of radical and materialist feminists, the practices of beauty have both symbolic power in defining sex/gender, and direct material effects in

[20] On this view, the production of sex/gender is the production of heterosexuality and vice versa. Women's difference from men is fundamental to the definition of 'woman' under male domination and this difference is made most clearly manifest in physical characteristics and appearance (Guillaumin, 2005)

[21] Jeffreys argues that "The process of transitioning from the condition in which a girl may…. use her strong body in physical activities and give no thought to how she looks, to "femininity" in which she must learn to walk in crippling shoes …and constantly paint and check her face…. is a harsh one…Their mothers, girls and women's magazines, and their friends, train them and there is much to learn…Girls have to practice femininity until it feels "natural" in order to create sexual difference (Jeffreys, 2005: 65).

prescribing how women are able to use their bodies and therefore "the dimensions of [their] physical freedom" and hence their social freedoms (Dworkin, 1979: 113-114). However, women's embrace of beauty practices is at least partly a 'rational' response to conditions under which their social and sexual value depends upon it. To do otherwise would be to risk "desexualization, if not outright annihilation" (Bartky, 1990: 77)[22].

These accounts emphasize the body's materiality, in the sense that it 'embodies' social relations and is constrained (or enabled) by them (Bordo, 2003). On this view, the female body is a target of gender power relations and its objectification is sometimes explicitly understood as a violating or violent enactment of those relations. Dworkin makes this clear in her argument that pornography not only causes violence, but *is* violence against women because the sexual objectification on which it is premised normalizes the construction of women as 'things' for men's use. Kilbourne makes a similar point:

> Turning a human being into a thing, an object, is almost always the first step towards justifying violence against that person…this step is already taken with women. The violence, the abuse, is partly the chilling but logical result of the objectification (Kilbourne, 1999, cited in Gill, 2007a).

Though the connection between beauty practices and violence via the notion of objectification is implicit in many feminist accounts, it is rarely subjected to further analysis. Even the physical suffering involved in some beauty practices is seen as a measure of the power of beauty culture in women's lives (Bartky, 2002) rather than an enactment of violence. However, Shelia Jeffreys makes the connection more explicit in positioning Western beauty practices under the rubric of 'harmful traditional practices (HTPs) as defined in the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All forms of

[22] As Dworkin argues, "[s]carcely any woman dares to ignore male ideas of ideal female beauty altogether because these ideas will significantly determine the quality and limits of any woman's life" (Dworkin, 1979:116).

Discrimination Against Women (1979)[23]. The idea of establishing particular gendered practices as HTPs was an attempt "to get culturally condoned forms of violence against women included within a UN human rights agenda" (Winter et al, 2002:72). In practice, however, it has been almost exclusively applied to non-western practices such as female genital cutting and polygamy. The implication here is that the cultures of individualistic liberal western democracies are not harmful to women because even some of its most physically damaging manifestations, for instance cosmetic surgery, are understood as freely chosen (Ibid, 2002, Jeffreys, 2005). The attribution of free-will and self-determination to Western subjects both retrenches an imperialist view of the global South as 'uncivilized' or 'backward' (Gill, 2007a), and erases:

> …the more subtle ways in which male domination operates under conditions of modernity, including the way in which women come to subject themselves to practices which maintain their subordination to men and male interests (Winter et al, 2002: 72).

The UN defines HTPs as:

> …being "harmful to the health of girls and women; arising from the material power differences between the sexes; being for the benefit of men; creating stereotyped masculinity and femininity which damage the opportunities of women and girls; being justified by tradition (Jeffreys, 2005: 29).

Western beauty practices on a continuum from lipstick to cosmetic surgery, Jeffreys argues, fit this definition. Firstly, she points to the obvious health risks of cosmetic surgery, although there is evidence that the chemicals in everyday beauty products carry significant longer term risks, particular for girls and young women (Koo & Lee, 2004) and for beauty workers (Yeomans et al, H& S Executive, 2009). In addition, it

[23] State Parties to the convention are asked to: "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (UN, 1979, art. 5 (a): cited in Jefferys, 2005:29)

could also be argued that insofar as everyday beauty practices mark the female body as subordinate, objectified and stigmatized (Tseelon,1992) they are implicated in the socio-psychological effects of oppression which may be more insidious and profound (Bartky, 1990). Secondly, Jeffreys argues that beauty practices arise out of the lower value placed on women- a status which is both produced by and reflected in employment and wage inequalities, in domestic and sexual violence and in pornography and the sex industry. Thirdly, she maintains that through the production of (hetero)sexual difference, beauty practices help to sustain broader machinery of male domination and are therefore in the interests of men within patriarchal social structures. Lastly, beauty practices produce gender stereotypes which not only define women in terms of their bodies but also circumscribe the ways in which they are able to enter work and other public spaces. This is underscored by research showing how women workers may be forced to negotiate conflicting demands to present themselves as 'professional' on masculine terms and acceptably feminine (Puwar, 2004, cited in Jeffreys, 2005). In their study of make-up at work, Dellinger & Williams (1997) point to the accounts of their lesbian participants whose negotiation of heterosexual workplace appearance norms dramatizes the personal and professional costs of non-conformity. Producing bodily femininity at work may be particularly relevant for workers whose jobs, as discussed in the final section of this chapter, involve face-to-face service work.

One of the major criticisms leveled at materialist and radical feminist approaches like Jeffreys' is that they use a 'top-down" model of power (Davis, 1999). Whether explicitly acknowledged or not, this critique is informed by post-structuralist and post-modern frameworks and by the 'turn to culture' in social and feminist theory (Jackson, 2001) which, as discussed in chapter four, shifts the focus of debate from material inequalities and the ideologies and practices which sustain them, to a concern with the discursive construction of subjectivities and technologies of reflexive self-production.

Liz Frost (1999), for example, argues that whilst 'doing looks' might be shaped by 'cultural norms' it is also a source of 'pleasure', an expression of embodied 'personhood'

and an 'identificatory' practice in which women (she is interestingly silent about male 'personhood') can achieve positive self-identity. Women, she argues;

> …must be given every encouragement to value their knowledge and skills (about 'doing looks'), and indeed the outcomes of this range of activities as highly as possible (Ibid, 1999:134).

Similarly, in Kathy Davis' (1995) study of women undergoing breast augmentation surgery, research participants are represented as being critical and aware of the moral contradictions involved in their 'choices' , and as acting actively and strategically to 're-negotiate' their relationships to their bodies in order to "construct a different sense of self" (Davis, 1995:27). In reversing the relationship identified by feminists between beauty and objectification, Davis constitutes women's engagement in beauty practices as an active choice to "avoid the entrapment of objectification" - to become "an embodied subject rather than an objectified body" (Ibid:113). To some extent, this resonates with Frost's later and more materialist study of young women and body-hatred in which she found that being able to produce an appropriately feminine appearance allowed a sense of "feeling good about your looks which might give you the space to ignore it for a while" (Frost, 2001:147). However, her participants were only able to make the space to experience themselves as subjects if they felt able to conform "to the successful production of feminine identity" (Ibid:146). This strategy was therefore predicated on remaining "constantly visible as an object of the male gaze" (Ibid: 146). To claim, as Davis does, that beauty practices are "first and foremost….about taking one's life into one's own hands" (Davis, 1995:157) is to underplay the role of the discourses and practices of beauty in producing objectification and insecurity about appearance in the first place. Nevertheless, the emphasis on choice, pleasure and self-production is common in writing on beauty from the 1990s onwards. Debra Gimlin (2002), in her study of a New York hair salon, also refutes the idea that women's engagement with appearance practices can be explained primarily as a product of oppressive power relations. In response to 'older' feminist views of beauty, she asserts that it is "implausible that millions of women who engage in body work blindly submit to

such control or choose to make their bodies physical manifestations of their own subordination" (Gimlin, 2002:2).

On one level, this view suggests a mis-reading of materialist feminist work. The meanings that women give to beauty practices, including those tied up with pleasure, anxiety and identity, and the ambivalence they experience in relation to them, are often central in feminist theory which stresses social or cultural constraints on women's choices (Bartky, 1990, Bordo, 2003). The difference is in the way these perspectives emphasize the relationship between subjective experience and structural power relations. The theoretical tensions between the two approaches are informed both by methodological issues and fundamental differences in conceptions of agency. With the exception of Chapkis (1983) and Morgan (1991) there was little empirical research specifically on beauty practices before Davis and Gimlin's studies. Indeed, one of the criticisms of feminist theorizations of beauty is that because they are not 'grounded' in everyday experience, women's "active and lived relationship to their bodies seems to disappear" (Davis, 1991: 29).

Davis' and Gimlin's ethnographic studies have attempted to 're-ground' understandings of beauty by privileging the individual experiences of research subjects over theoretical models. However, in trying avoid treating women as 'cultural dopes', they resort to voluntaristic conceptions of agency. As Davis herself admits, such an approach "runs the risk of suspending attention from the systemic or structured patterns of women's involvement in the cultural beauty system"(Davis, 1995:180). However, her argument suggests that it is not possible to 'have it both ways'. She was, in her terms, able to "elicit extensive and open-hearted personal stories from women who have had cosmetic surgery" (Davis, 1995:161) only by avoiding 'contamination' by politically invested feminist theory. This antagonistic polarization of materialist feminism and embodied experience is a restatement of the structure -agency dualism embedded in much social theory. In particular it is a reflection of what Craig (2006) calls the 'domination versus pleasure dichotomy' in feminist debates on beauty. On one side are perspectives that position women's engagement with beauty as a response to power bearing down on

them, and on the other are those "who view bodily transformation as an expression of free will" (Ibid:165). However, by definition it would be difficult to find examples of feminist work on beauty which treats women merely as automatons. Nor do voluntaristic perspectives completely discount structural power relations. Whilst Craig's dichotomy obscures some of the nuances and overlaps in feminist approaches, it is also useful in thinking about the problems involved both in underplaying women's affective relationship to appearance practices and in relegating power to the margins of analysis. Neither position allows us to grasp the relationship between feelings of pleasure and empowerment, or of anxiety and bodily shame, and the re-production dominant power relations through beauty practices.

Some feminist accounts are extremely useful in suggesting ways to bridge the domination/pleasure divide. Both Iris Marion Young (1989) and Sandra Bartky (1990) position women as both subject to structural power relations and as taking an active part in their reproduction. Young shows how a girl might come to take up and embody femininity (her sexual difference from males) through a process which involves a learnt relationship to her body based on a tension between patriarchal definitions of woman as 'mere body', an object of another's gaze, and her knowledge of herself as an embodied subject, "a living manifestation of action and intention" (Ibid :66)24. Through this, she develops "habits of feminine body deportment.. [and]…a bodily timidity that increases with age (Ibid: 66). For Young, the contradiction inherent in being a woman has its roots in the "structures and conditions which delimit the typical situation of being a woman in a particular society" (Ibid,1989:54). However, how women live this situation is central to the production and reproduction of femininity. To the extent that a woman experiences herself as objectified, she also "actively takes up her body as a mere thing. She gazes at it in the mirror, prunes it, shapes it, molds and decorates it" (Ibid, 1989: 66).

[24] In her essay 'Throwing Like a Girl', Young draws on the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and existentialism of De Beauvoir, the latter informed by the notion that all human action is motivated by the tension between the body's immanence and the desire to 'transcend' it.

Susan Bartky (1990) takes up the theme of women's active engagement in femininity. Drawing on the Marxist concept of alienation and Foucault's notion of disciplinary power, discussed in chapter four, she illuminates how women might 'interiorize' structures of dominance and subordination in the context of modernity in which the exercise of formal sanctions or physical force may accompany, but are not necessary, to the reproduction of sexual difference and inequality. Her analysis centers on sexual objectification as part of the material and cultural condition of women who are over-identified with the body in a culture which regards it as "intrinsically less valuable, indeed less inherently human, than mind or personality" (Bartky, 1990:35). This condition, she argues, "is the epitome of alienation" (Ibid: 35). Self-alienation encourages women not only to regard their bodies/selves from the perspective of the Other, but also to internalize this 'gaze', becoming "at once seer and seen, appraiser and thing appraised" (Young, cited in Bartky,1990: 36).

Liz Frost's study suggests that the notion of disciplinary power and the tension between objectification and subjectification may have real purchase on the experiences of women in contemporary Western society. On the basis of interviews with young women and some young men, Frost argues that as girls grow into adolescence they become increasingly aware of themselves as being watched and increasingly estranged from their own bodies:

> Self-consciousness is…inherent in girls newly acquired position as 'the object of the gaze….woman is 'to be looked at' and eroticized. This surveillance leads to constant self-surveillance…in relation to appearance, but also in relation to the whole project of femininity: posture, gesture and appearance(Frost, 2001:195).

Frost, like Bartky (1990), argues that being constantly visible is a precondition of shame, a form of "serious identity damage" (ibid: 136) which, in Goffman's terms, is "the subjectively experienced dimension of being stigmatized" (Ibid: 136), in this case, experiencing the body through the gaze of others as flawed and inadequate. Tseelon, however, suggests that women are stigmatized not just for being 'unattractive', but "by

the very expectation to be beautiful" (Tseelon, 1992:299); by the fact that they "constantly exist on display " (Ibid:300) and in a state of self-consciousness, and because :

> ..uncertainty is built into the construction of beauty as defining social and self worth, followed by permanent insecurity of becoming ugliness unless rigorous discipline is exercised (Tseelon,1992: 301).

Tseelon argues that beauty can be seen as a 'stigma symbol' for women, rather than a 'prestige symbol', even though some performances will attract more social approval, or in Bourdieu's terms, carry more 'corporeal capital', than others. The production of beauty may also be a rewarding experience for many women, because ""the beauty system" is naturalized by the ideology of sexual differences and is made to feel essential to femininity" (Tseelon, 1992:302). This reveals the political nature of stigma which, rather than being an attribute of a person as psychological perspectives define it, is an ideological construction which reproduces domination. In Tseelon's view, the stigma of beauty is "inscribed into the construction of the women" (Ibid: 304) through a series of paradoxes. The rejection of femininity has been associated in medicalized discourses with 'gender identity disorders', but embracing it too overtly carries the risk of being seen as narcissistic. When a woman "embraces the fantasy of timeless beauty she is a fake" (Ibid:304), but embracing a 'natural look' can involve the same continual effort of self-production. If a women refuses the disciplines of beauty or is unable to conform to idealized standards "she is devalued. However, if she succeeds she underlines how her value is legitimated through appearance, her non-identity" (Ibid:304) . In this sense, appearance becomes a 'master status' for women, arguably the premise on which the beauty industry relies in both producing and then promising to alleviate the experience of living in an 'inferiorized body' (Bartky, 1990).

Crucially, the importance of the body as locus of pleasure (Craig, 2006) as well as emotional pain is taken into account by perspectives which stress domination. Bartky (1990), for example, emphasizes the "delights of a narcissistic kind that go along with

the status of “sex object” (Ibid: 28), and the pleasure and ‘empowerment’ experienced in acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to produce bodily femininity. However, narcissism is predicated on being “too closely identified” with the body (Ibid:35) and is continually ‘shattered’ in inevitable comparisons between the self and idealized images of female beauty. And though beauty skills may produce “a sense of mastery” (Ibid:77) they are used to work on bodies which are socially positioned as “deficient to begin with [and] forever in need of plucking or painting, of slimming down or fattening up, or firming or flattening” (Ibid:29). Likewise, Bordo draws on the idea of disciplinary power to argue that exercise and dieting are technologies of the self which can enhance a sense of “personal comfort and power” (Bordo, 2001:31) whilst simultaneously producing ‘docile bodies’. Furthermore, she argues that women can diet or exercise with the conscious and ‘rational’ aim of increasing their sense of value and their chances of success at work or in relationships. They are clearly not ‘cultural dopes’, but their practices are still actively compliant with dominant power relations.

These perspectives point to the possibility that agency and structure, pleasure and power, do not cancel each other out. However, this does not mean that power can be acknowledged and then “bracketed off” from women’s lived experiences of beauty (Davis, 1995:160), as Davis and Gimlin suggest. In Bordo’s terms, pleasure is consistent with the disciplinary regimes of femininity and may be the product of power relations whose shape may be very different” (Bordo, 2003:27).

Class, ‘race’ and the historical specificity of beauty

The idea that materialist feminist theory has presented a disembodied account of women’s relationship to beauty practices is taken up by Craig (2006) who argues that in centering their analysis on a female subject who is “a racially unmarked, implicitly heterosexual woman of an unspecified class”, feminists have often failed to theorize the embeddedness of beauty in class, race and other dimensions of inequality. However, those on the ‘pleasure’ side of the dichotomy have also failed to recognize the ways in

which women's engagement with beauty is mediated through classed and racialized positions. For instance, Gimlin's (2002) suggestion that middle class white women who refuse the advice of stylists to adopt a particular hair style are resisting dominant beauty standards sidesteps, according to Craig, the evidence of her own fieldwork that women's decisions are informed by a desire to express social status through their bodies. Craig argues that what is 'resisted' in such cases are "forms of femininity…associated with poor women and women of colour" (Craig, 2006:166) in favour of "alternatives…associated with the dominant class and race" (Ibid: 166)

Claims of resistance, therefore, need to be assessed in relation to how different and competing standards of appearance articulate with dominant definitions of femininity. Skeggs argues that "the sign of femininity is always classed" (Skeggs, 1997:98). Contemporary constructions have their roots in eighteenth century upper class notions of the 'lady' "which equated conduct with appearance" (Ibid:99), and in nineteenth century bourgeois domestic ideology which counterposed the idealized dependence, physical 'frailty', and moral 'purity' of middle class women against the physically 'robust' and potentially morally and 'sexually dangerous' working class woman. Whilst white middle class women could use bodily femininity to distinguish themselves as 'respectable', working class Black and White women, "coded as the sexual and deviant other against which femininity was defined" (Ibid:99), were positioned at a distance from this construct both ideologically and materially and so were unable to claim femininity as a given . These distinctions reverberate into contemporary intersections of gender, class and race and provide the context in which women "negotiate a sense of self through beauty work…as socially located women positioning themselves In relation to socially located beauty standards" (Craig, 2006:166). For example, Skeggs shows how the working class care students in her study invested in their appearance in order to 'look respectable', but were also aware that overt displays of femininity could make them vulnerable to the sexualized stigmas associated with working class women. Similarly, Craig discusses how, prior to the civil rights movement, middle class Black women in the US used practices such as hair straightening to signify value and respectability defined against dominant racist constructions of the 'hypersexual' or

servile Black woman. Brumberg also documents the way in which Black women in the 1930s to 1950s used bleaching products to lighten “dark and unlovely” skin (Brumberg 1997:78). In these cases, the ‘corporeal capital’ that marginalized women attempt to accrue in order to assert dignity is precarious and bound up in structures of inequality. As both Skeggs and Craig show, women’s attempts to use appearance practices to make themselves respectable also positions them in competition with each other in “local hierarchies of corporal capital” (Skeggs, 1997:104) which leave the stigmatized position of marginalized women unchanged (Craig, 2006). Even when women have most obviously used appearance as a tool of political resistance, their practices can become defined in terms of new beauty norms. Craig points to Black women in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the 1960s refusing the practice of hair straightening and adopting the afro both as a sign of politicized racial identity and to conform to the standards of feminine beauty held by men in the movement. In spite of women’s active participation in political struggle, beauty practices arguably marked women as symbolic ‘objects of exchange between men’ (Lovell, 2000), rather than subjects of that struggle.

Definitions and practices of beauty exist “at a congested crossroads of forces” (Craig, 2006:160) and are also historically specific. Both Lois Banner (1983) and Joan Brumberg (1997) show how beauty standards in America changed from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the late modern era. Brumberg’s study of the diaries of girls from Victorian times to the 1990s charts the changing significance of the body in the lives of young women and the shaping of this through religious and medical discourses, the rise of consumer capitalism and discourses of individual and sexual freedom. Though it is predominantly a study of white middle and upper class experience, it points to some key shifts in dominant discourses of femininity and the body. Brumberg (1997) argues that at the end of the nineteenth century the ideal feminine body was defined in terms of its smallness and ‘frailty’. Girls’ diaries of this era suggest that their struggles for personal identity revolved around concerns with morality, ‘internal character’, and ‘dignity’. Underscoring the association of beauty with race, a “smooth white complexion

signified the genteel lady" (Black, 2004: 22) and her lack of physical labour and was often produced through home- made creams and complexion lighteners.

Different concerns were reflected in diaries of the 1920s and '30s, written against a backdrop of burgeoning cosmetics and movie industries in the US, and medicalized discourses which linked hygiene to skin and hair beauty. Young women began to talk about their identities and anxieties in terms of 'image' and about their attempts to produce 'attractiveness' through dieting and skin care. In the US and UK during and after the second world war, The notion of cosmetics as a tool for enhancing 'natural assets' became "part of a culture of femininity" (Black, 2004:35) displacing (at least partially) their earlier association with the 'dangerous artifice' of sexually immoral and prostituted women (Black, 2004)[25]. Brumberg links the intensification of girls concern with their appearance in the following decades to the power of consumer capitalism in creating the conditions under which girls began to see their bodies as 'projects' of self-production. By the 1950s and early 1960s a whole pedagogical machinery was in place in the US involving physicians, entrepreneurs, the culture, media, fashion and beauty industries, and mothers and young women themselves in 'figure control', 'breast management' and other technologies which conflated 'health', beauty and sexual allure. Whilst middle class women in the UK and US, retrenched in suburban homes after the war, suffered the psychosocial consequences of the oppressive conditions of their lives (Friedan, 1963; Gavron, 1966), "cosmetics companies were selling the ideals of fantasy and escapism …sexuality became part of this…and advertisements began to engage with female sexuality as a marketing tool" (Black, 2004: 36)

What Brumberg calls the 'disappearance of virginity' in the 1960 and 1970s provided a putative freedom from older forms of bodily and sexual regulation but, as many feminist have argued, the so called 'sexual revolution' has given rise to other regulatory discourses and practices. Some accounts locate contemporary regimes of femininity at

[25] Black suggests that threats to the gender order posed by women working in male occupations during the war was behind attempts to retrench normative gender power relations, and thus male 'morale', by encouraging women to adopt more overt signifiers of femininity.

the intersection between the individualizing logics of neo-liberal capitalism and patriarchal gender relations. Angela McRobbie, for example, suggests that the apparently paradoxical construction of young women as freely choosing individuals who are also 'reassuringly feminine' is partly the product of a backlash against the gains of feminism. In this context, the fashion, beauty and media industries become channels for the symbolic retrenchment of normative gender relations. McRobbie and others argue that "post-feminist femininity" (Ringrose & Renold, 2008:336) should be understood in the context of the kinds of governmentality characteristic of late modernity (Frost, 2001, Giddens, 1991) in which concerns with the self and its wellbeing, and with the body and its appearance, become increasingly important in the production of individualized subjects and consumers. In this context, the construction of gendered, classed and racialized identities is bound up in the "general aestheticization of everyday life" (Hennessy, 1995, cited in Adkins, 2002) in which "the surface representation of things, their appearance and visual icon… [are] valorized in a society concerned primarily with the attractiveness of commodities" (Frosh, 1991, cited in Frost, 2001:37).

> Consumer culture latches on to the…. body encouraging individuals to…combat deterioration and decay…and combines it with the notion that the body is a vehicle of pleasure and self-expression (Featherstone, 1991, Cited in Frost, 2001:29).

Post-modern conceptions of the body's endless plasticity (Bordo, 2003) adhere in these conceptions and provide the ideological framework in which young women are not only concerned with the size and shape of their bodies, but are obliged to constantly monitor and perfect them through dieting, 'body management', cosmetics and even surgery[26] if they are to produce themselves as modern feminine subjects (McRobbie, 2009). However, as Frost points out, people's ability to operate as reflexive producers of

[26] According to a 2011 survey, half of all young women aged 16-21 would consider cosmetic surgery and over 1 in 10 girls aged 11-16 would consider cosmetic surgery to change the way they look (Girl Guides Association, 2011)

themselves are constrained in number of ways. Firstly, they are constrained by classed limits on access to the resources (time and money) needed to produce an idealized body or 'lifestyle'. Those who are unable to 'consume themselves into being' (Walkerdine, 2003) are also excluded from "comfortably inhabiting an idealized feminine position" (Gonick, 2006: 17). Secondly, the assumption that appearance practices are acts of creative self-production is belied by increasingly narrow definitions of feminine attractiveness. The youthful, thin body is currently a hegemonic standard. Contemporary ideals are implicitly racialized in a context "where white skin and European ethnic features" (Frost, 2001:138) are the norm against which bodies are valued or stigmatized. Thirdly, the idealized body is illusory, ultimately unattainable and, because of the centrality of 'youthfulness', always temporary, although the notion that aging can be combated is one of the most powerful discourses circulated by the beauty industry (McRobbie, 2009).

In this context, the production of sexual difference is particularly complex given that young men are also subject to consumer culture through the discourses of advertising and other cultural media, are now "stimulated to look at themselves-and other men-as objects of consumer desire" (Mort, 1988, cited in Frost, 2001:174). It could be argued that the traditional terms of sexual difference are being broken down; even that teenage culture is becoming more gender homogenous (Frost, 2001:175) or 'feminised' (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Some theorists have argued that masculinity is culturally understood to proceed from the male body as much as femininity proceeds from the female body (Connell, 1995). However, Frost echoes Young and Bartky in her argument that the merging of young women's identities with the body, and their simultaneous dissociation from it, produces a very different subjectivity to that of young men who experience their bodies, or who are at least expected to experience them, in terms of their capacities for action and achievement; their capacity to transcend the body's immanence (Young,1989).

This is reflected in the ubiquitous advertising image of the sportsman as " a potent symbol of power" and "the grail of the consumer capitalist zeitgeist" (Frost, 2001:178).

Whilst young women are constructed as the "body of the mind/body dualism" (and suffer varying degrees of 'identity damage' as a result), young men, have a "range of ways of being, from which healthier and more confident subjectivities can be constructed. They are the rational, privileged subjects of the mind/body duality" (Ibid, 176).

These differences, Frost argues, explain why young women are more likely to suffer from 'body-hatred' and to express it through eating 'disorders', deliberate self –harm or obsession with appearance[27]. Whilst most studies have tended to suggest that young, middle class white women are most vulnerable to these 'conditions', more recent research has challenged this by connecting self -harm to patterns of classed and racialized social inequality, suggesting that socially marginalized and disadvantaged women may be particularly at risk (Borill et al, 2003). But if Bulimia, anorexia and self-harm are expressions of body –hatred, what about the everyday, normalized practices of beauty? Whilst Bartky (1990) suggests that they reflect and play a central role in reproducing women's sense of bodily alienation and shame, Shaw (2002), makes a direct connection between self-harm and normalized appearance practices suggesting that they can be understood as expressions of women's suffering in the face of social disadvantage and sexual objectification (Shaw 2002). I discuss this idea further in chapter five.

The increasingly sexualized nature of contemporary consumer culture has also been identified as a major factor in shaping women's appearance practices. Coy (2011) suggests that popular culture circulates discourses which glamorize commercial sex, "mainstreaming the idea that women exist as sex objects" (Coy, 2011:443) and inciting them to adopt sexualized high street fashion, or so called 'ho chic'. Mainstream beauty practices may also be shaped by the sex industry. Jeffreys (2005) argues that the 'domestication of pornography' may in part account for the increased demand since the early 1990s for breast augmentation and surgical procedures to 'neaten' the labia or tighten the vagina. She argues that this has been produced both by men pressurizing female partners into conformity with pornographic representations (see also Shaw,

[27] In medicalized terms this is labelled 'body dysmorphic disorder' (Frost, 2001).

1999) and by women becoming more aware of the appearance of their genitals in comparison with these. In terms of beauty salon practices, the popularity of 'Brazilian waxing' (complete removal of pubic hair) seems to have coincided with a "trend towards hairlessness" (Castleman, cited in Ibid: 79) in pornography from the 1980s.

Rosalind Gill also suggests that more intensely sexualized representations of women are being circulated through advertising, and particularly through the marketing of fashion and beauty. In this context, femininity is increasingly framed as a "bodily property rather than a social ….or psychological one [and]…… the possession of a 'sexy body' … is presented as a key source of identity " (Gill, 2008: 42).

A particularly salient characteristic of contemporary representations is that they employ a "pronounced discourse of choice and autonomy" (Ibid: 41)[28]. The emphasis on female 'empowerment' in advertising reflects what McRobbie has understood as a broader "post feminist gender settlement" being imposed on women by government and other institutions in which the appropriation of liberal feminist principles of equality functions to obscure and retrench continuing structural power relations (McRobbie, 2009). The idealized appearance which women are required to produce "come[s] straight out of the most predictable templates of male sexual fantasy, yet… must also be understood as authentically owned by the women who enact them"(Gill, 2008 :45).

It is in this context that, as Attwood (2005) argues, the beauty and fashion industries 'sell sex' to women, producing new forms of sexual subjectivity in which the objectifying male gaze appears to recede into the background, "replaced instead with a new horizon of self-imposed feminine cultural norms…. against which women must endlessly and repeatedly measure themselves" (McRobbie, 2009:63).

[28] Fashion lingerie advertising, for example, uses the imagery of pornography juxtaposed with texts which appear to validate feminist values and emphasize female sexual pleasure and autonomy. The language of beauty product advertising circulates a similar discourse in exhorting the female consumer to "empower your eyes" (Shiseido mascara advertisement, cited in Gill, 2007a) or to "Discover the power of femininity" (Unisense Slimming Company Campaign, cited in Lazar, 2007: 157).

These norms also inform the “violent heterosexualized politics within which girls are incited to compete” (Ringrose, 2008: 34). Recent research points to the way in which pre-pubescent and teenage girls act as “employees of the “male gaze”” (Renold & Allen, 2006: 426), with girls friendship groups playing a key role in defining, performing and regulating normative femininity. This, however, takes place through contradictory discourses which incite girls to sexualized displays of femininity whilst subjecting them to ’older’ but still powerful notions of ‘good girls’ and ‘bad girls’ (Gill, 2009). In Ringrose’s (2008) study, girls who resisted the pressure to hyper-sexualized performances of heterofemininity also “enacted highly regulative, classed discourses around feminine sexuality, positioning others as “sluts”, “horrible” and ‘Mean” (Ibid:53). As she suggests, given the entrenched association of sexualized display with working class femininity, economically and culturally marginalized girls may well have a particular investment in distancing themselves from these discourses and in projecting this image onto others. At the same, however, they may have a particular stake in investing in their appearance in the absence of other forms of capital (educational and economic) through which to assert self- value.

Beauty therapy, emotional and aesthetic labour and ‘professionalism’

Black argues that the beauty salon is “a site par excellence, where attainment of femininity and its definition are negotiated” (Black, 2004:40). The contemporary beauty industry operates against the backdrop of historical changes in women’s relationship to their bodies and the aestheticization and commercialization of everyday life in contemporary society. Beauty therapy itself involves a collection of practices aimed at improving the appearance and emotional and physical ‘wellbeing’ of clients. It is situated within a vast multinational industry which includes cosmetics, hair and skin care products, cosmetic surgery and the diet industry, beauty treatments and massage in hair or beauty salons, spas, gyms, hair and on cruise ships, and the advertising industry which promotes products and activities (Black, 2004). In the last two decades, hairdressing and beauty therapy has been one of the fastest growing UK industries,

worth £4 billion in 2002 and 5.25 billion in 2008 (HABIA, 2012). In 2005, the beauty therapy industry alone (including treatments delivered in spas, health clubs and salons) had a annual turnover of £904 million and employed 39, 500 staff of whom 98 percent were women earning an average gross weekly wage of £205 and an average hourly wage of £6.98 (HABIA, 2007). These figures may well exclude many self-employed workers running their own micro-business as 'mobile' beauty therapists. Evidence presented by HABIA, the government appointed sector skills body for the hairdressing and beauty industries, suggests that demand for suitably skilled beauty therapists has outstripped the supply of staff with employers experiencing difficulties in filling posts (HABIA, 2007). This is in stark contrast to a more recent report by the Local Government Association which suggests that whilst 57,000 16 to 18 year olds attained qualifications in hair and beauty in 2010/11, there were only 18,000 new jobs in the sector (Gardiner & Wilson, 2012). This discrepancy may be partly due to the much wider scope of the LGA's research in comparison with the size of HABIA's research sample. In addition, the effects of recession may well have had a bearing on the size of the UK beauty therapy industry since 2008 although there is little empirical evidence to support this and the notion that the beauty industry is 'recession proof' is still widely circulated[29]

What is also unclear from the available data is who the clients are[30]. The proliferation of beauty salons in inner city, suburban and rural areas, some micro-businesses, others franchises of larger companies, suggests that women across class and race divides are using 'professional' beauty services. However, Black (2004) suggests that there are class differences in the kinds of 'treatments' engaged by clients and that the treatments

[29] The idea that demand for beauty products and services typically rises during economic recessions has been widely circulated by the marketing industry and is reflected in some consumer psychology research (Hill et al, 2012) The 'Lipstick Effect' suggests that women use beauty practices to 'boost morale' during 'hard times' (Mintel, 2008), although the Guild of Beauty Therapists suggests that the "increasing pressure to look good" may be behind this and account for why women also continue to visit beauty salons. However, the 'continuing growth' in the industry is also attributed to increased numbers of men using salon services. However, Mintel (2009) now refutes the idea of the lipstick effect, suggesting that in the current recession it has been replaced by 'Austerity Chic'.

[30] Whilst HABIA (2007) research suggests that in 2006 average expenditure per UK household on hairdressing and beauty treatments was £161, this is not aggregated by socio-economic status or gender and obscures the size of separate spend on beauty as opposed to hairdressing treatments.

offered in salons reflect the class composition of the locality. In her study, one salon in particular targeted working class women and mainly provided 'looking treatments'; 'routine grooming' and 'corrective' practices involving removal of facial and body hair through waxing or electrolysis, and manicures, pedicures and facials. Though the discourse of 'pleasure' was not inconsistent with these treatments, they were mainly perceived in instrumental terms as 'necessities'. Whilst salons in middle class areas offered the same 'looking treatments', although with less of an emphasis on painful practices such as hair removal, there was also a focus on what Black calls 'feeling treatments', various forms of massage, facial treatments and other holistic therapies understood to alleviate symptoms of ill health or to contribute to a sense of 'wellbeing' as part of living a 'healthy lifestyle'. In these contexts, the discourse of 'pampering', self-indulgence and 'taking time for myself' was more evident. Treatments were generally more expensive in these salons and there was more of an emphasis on creating a welcoming and relaxing 'ambience' in order to make the client 'feel special'.

The inclusion of 'health' and 'wellbeing' practices such as massage and aromatherapy under the rubric of beauty suggests the way in which the beauty therapy industry has diversified in the last three decades, producing a discourse which conflates a feminine appearance with a 'holistic' conception of health. This, argues Black, has coincided with an intensification of neo-liberal, free market discourses and the shifting of responsibility for welfare from social provision onto individuals who are expected to maintain their own health through 'lifestyle choices', calling on 'experts' to assist where necessary. It is, however, mainly middle class women who are able to position themselves as subjects within this discourse. Citing Bourdieu, Black and Sharma suggest that differential access to economic resources may become manifest in classed dispositions which give "the working class… an instrumental relationship to their bodies [whilst the middle class] sees the body as an end in itself" (Black & Sharma 2001: 112). Whilst salon use may cut across class boundaries, at least where there is sufficient disposable income to make it possible, "once in the salon the habitus of the woman leads to different activities" (Ibid: 112). In this sense, differential access to both economic and cultural capital may determine the kinds of salons, treatments and

discourses of beauty to which women have access. For women, however, "the body 'always, already' acts as a vital form of capital. Work on the body is necessary for the achievement of an 'appropriate' femininity" (Ibid: 163), even though 'appropriateness', like 'respectability' (Skeggs, 1997), is always mediated by class, 'race' and other social positions. This is the basis of Gimlin's assertion that "beauty is not an end in itself (Gimlin, 2002:48), and of Black's argument that "[w]e are not really ever judged according to aesthetics, but rather aesthetic symbols become signifiers of other categories" (Black, 2004:190). In her view, the significance of 'beauty' is its connection to appropriately classed, racialized and sexualized performances of self. Whilst this appears to sidestep the intense concerns some women have about being or not being 'beautiful', it does point to the complexities in women's relationship to beauty practices and also to how these are reflected in the work of the beauty therapist.

Central to the work of beauty therapists is the production of feelings of wellbeing and self-confidence in clients, whether through 'improving' their appearance, or through making them feel 'special' and 'pampered', or both (Gimlin, 2002; Black, 2004; Black & Sharma, 2001). This demands a great deal of emotional management on the part of workers, as well as attention to their bodily self-presentation. The concepts of emotional labour, and more latterly aesthetic labour, have been used by sociologists in exploring gendered and classed inequalities in the workplace where the nature of employment has shifted from traditionally male dominated manufacturing jobs to more flexible, low-paid, often part-time work in service industries in which women are increasingly concentrated in front line customer service roles (Noon & Blyton, 2002).

Hochschild (1983) argues that work in late capitalist societies is characterized by a shift from exploitation of the physical body to exploitation in more psychological, emotional terms. Her concept of emotional labour names a type of work process in which the emotional style of delivery is consumed as part of the service itself. Workers are "required to manage their own feelings in order to create and control the reaction of the customer" (Pettinger, 2005:463):

> …in processing people the product is a state of mind… [It] requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. (Hochschild, 1983: 6-7)

Emotional labour "draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality" (Ibid: 7) and whilst it is potentially a site of human connection, when it is commercialized and subject to external prescription and control it becomes a source of alienation "from an aspect of self-either body or the margins of the soul-that is used to do the work" (Ibid: 7). This can lead to a sense of dissonance between a worker's 'real' feelings and those she is expected to perform. It can also give rise to a compromised 'sense of self' and emotional 'burn out' where the 'deep' rather than 'surface acting' of emotions involves 'self-deception' as well as the deception of others. Crucially, emotional labour is deeply gendered, not just because women are over-represented in service jobs but because employers often regard women as innately possessing the kinds of characteristics suited to customer service work (Finch & Groves,1983). For instance, Taylor & Tyler (2000) found that telesales staff were recruited on the basis of such assumptions with mangers believing that women have a 'natural ability' to build a 'rapport' with customers. This naturalizing discourse points to one of the key characteristics of emotional labour: that it is often invisible or unacknowledged so that whilst it may be a key attribute of many service roles, it is typically not formally recognized as involving particular 'skills'. Rather, its association with immanent femininity and its concomitant devaluing (Bartky, 1990), means that employers are essentially able to avoid paying for emotional labour. However, the gendering of service work is not only accomplished through recruitment practices. If these gendered expectations shape the kinds of dispositions brought to the labour market, women may also 'select' themselves for emotional laboring jobs and deselect themselves form work less tied to femininity (Bourdieu, 2001).

In debates about the nature and implications of emotional labour some writers have taken issue with Hochshild's Marxist formulation on the grounds that it ignores 'agency' and the benefits and pleasures derived from emotional work by both workers and

recipients of their labour. Price (2001), for instance, argues that the mobilization of emotions in caring work can be intrinsically rewarding and can act as a moral safeguard against "an instrumental stance towards the other or indeed towards aspects of the self" (Price, 2001, cited in Colley, 2006: 16). In the context of beauty work, both Black (2004) and Gimlin (2002) point to the relative autonomy of beauty therapists working in small salons[31] to mobilize their own 'emotional styles' in acting as 'counsellors' or "intimate yet detached listener[s]" (Black, 2004: 117) for clients who bring their life problems as well as their appearance related insecurities to the salon. Unlike other forms of commercialized emotional labour in which workers are subject to more intense organizational surveillance and standardization, beauty therapists' relative freedom to deliver client satisfaction 'in their own way', and their sense that they are playing an important, even 'socially necessary' role in 'helping' them 'feel better about themselves', can lead to a strong sense of job satisfaction, self-value and pride even when the work is experienced as emotionally draining. This may suggest, as Wharton (1993, cited in Black, 2004) argues, that the conditions under which emotional labour takes place are as important as the emotional components of the work in assessing its psychosocial costs. However, just as the pleasures women derive from beauty practices can obscure and even reproduce its harms, the subjective sense of job satisfaction can hide the costs of emotional labour and its construction within power relations, even when it is conducted under conditions of relative worker autonomy. As Hochschild (1883) suggests, the most alienated labour may be that experienced as most satisfying by 'happy workers' because its reliance on 'deep acting' means that "it is farthest beyond workers' conscious control" (Cohen, 2010: 198).

[31] Cohen argues that employment relations shape the way in which emotional work can operates within or outside of an organization's 'feeling rules' and thus the capitalist labour process. Her focus is on the way in which in which self-employed hairdressers may be able to 'gift' emotion work to clients because neither their work nor profits are controlled by an employer. In this sense, their emotion work may not be emotional labour in Hochschild's terms. However, she argues that the necessity of deep- acting for both self-employed and waged workers depend on maintaining boundaries between themselves and clients. Because of this, maintaining a sense of authenticity "depends of labour commodification and therefore alienation" (Cohen, 2010:214).

Some feminists have argued that the naturalization of women's aesthetic and emotional labour has contributed to the routine de-skilling and low pay associated with women's care –related work' care-related work (England, 2005). In the case of beauty therapy, where ninety-eight percent of all workers are women (HABIA, 2007), most aspects of the work including care of clients, technical beauty skills and the physical self-presentation expected of beauty therapists, are defined in terms of naturalized feminine concerns and dispositions and this may have a significant impact on therapists' ability to position themselves as valuable workers and to defend themselves against the low public esteem in which beauty therapy is generally held (Black, 2004). Black (2004). Sharma & Black (2001), and Gimlin (2002) discuss the way in which the discourse of 'professionalism' on which beauty workers draw to emphasize their skills and knowledge can simultaneously undermine their claims to 'professional' status. In Black's (2004) study, workers compared their roles to those of recognized health professionals, particularly nurses and counsellors, on the grounds that in processing bodies and feelings they help to enhance the emotional and physical health of their clients. Whilst an emphasis on doing "good work" is often "the starting point for defining professionalism" (Schinkel & Noordegraaf, 2011: 68), they saw the abilities involved in this labour as emanating from everyday experience or 'personality' rather than from formally learnt specialist skills or knowledge, also a key element in dominant definitions of what constitutes a profession (Allsop & Saks, 2002, cited in Black, 2004). Although beauty workers may try to position themselves as professionals;

> …they do not…have the income or education associated with professional positions [and]…do not wield enormous power with their clients, in part because their emotional labour undermines their claims to professionalism (Gimlin, 2002:36).

The accounts of Black's respondents indicated that the discourse of emotional labour as an imminent feminine ability is reinforced in the training of beauty therapists where interpersonal or emotional skills are addressed only implicitly in the context of technical instruction (Ibid:121). As in other areas such as nursing (Smith, 1992), emotional labour

is central to the labour process but often invisible or unacknowledged (Hochschild, 1988). However, trying to gain recognition and legitimacy on the basis of emotional work, is, she argues, a 'risky strategy' given that "emotional work is based on the skills which most women automatically acquire through life experience" (Black, 2004:130).

The way in which emotional labour can reproduce class hierarchies is also an issue in more traditional areas of caring labour. As Colley points out, because working class nursery nurses provide childcare for middle class women they may "face a particularly strong imperative to be – and to appear to be – 'nice girls'" (Colley, 2006:19), an idea loaded with classed notions of moral propriety contained in dominant discourses in which working class women are positioned "either as posing a threat of…moral pollution, or as a civilizing social force – depending on the degree to which they take responsibility for the moral welfare of others" (Ibid:19). Caring thus becomes a sign of 'respectability', (Skeggs, 1997), an idea that may well be implicated in beauty therapists' emphasis on their 'emotional obligation' to prioritize clients' 'happiness' over their own judgments and feelings, regardless of how complaining, rude or demanding those clients are (Gimlin, 2002). In Hochschild's terms, this necessitates the 'deep acting' of emotion because of the difficulty of feigning care in such contexts. Consequently, "behind the mask [workers] listen to their own feelings at low volume" (Hochschild, 1983; 189). Skeggs points to the way in which the 'caring self' is produced in the intersection between gender and class:

> The caring self is…..is generated through both self-production and self-denial. The selflessness required to be a caring self is a gendered disposition… [C]are of the self…is the prerogative of someone who does not have to care for others to be seen as worthy of respect (Skeggs, 1997: 64).

The enactment of altruistic caring may allow emotional labourers to 'feel good' about themselves, and even to "position themselves as morally superior caring subjects" (Skeggs, 1997:62). In Gimlin's study, beauty workers tried to nullify status differences between themselves and their middle class clients by "conceptualizing an alternative

hierarchy….not based on education, occupation or income, but rather on appearance" (Gimlin, 2002:29), or on "special knowledge of gendered areas including…fashion, beauty and style" (Ibid:27). Whilst their self-positioning as 'experts' and emotional confidantes served to "strengthen [workers] commitments to their role in beauty culture" (Ibid:31) their service role and their financial dependence on customers means that they must ultimately defer to clients' wishes regardless of their own judgments in ways that are incompatible with the professional status they seek.

Emotional labour does not just reproduce gendered and classed power relations, but is also dependent on them. Colley's research suggests that "predispositions related to gender, family background and specific locations within the working class" (Colley et al, 2003:471) are necessary (though not sufficient by themselves) both for "effective learning" and as a basis for filtering and screening care students well before they apply for courses, with the result that the vast majority of students in her study already had experience of doing unpaid family care (Colley, 2006). In this sense, the kinds of 'vocational habitus' produced through their training was already a 'choosable identity'[32].

The kinds of caring performances demanded of students in Colley's study were also bound up with appearance, specifically with clothing and demeanor which signaled 'modesty' and conformity to the subordinate status of the trainee nursery nurse. The importance of bodily appearance in signifying status (Bourdieu, 2010), respectability (Skeggs, 1997) and moral and vocational dispositions indicates that, far from displacing exploitation of the physical body as Hochschild suggest, emotional labour includes "somatic or corporeal dimensions" (Witz, 2003:35)[33] . A number of theorists have used the concept of 'aesthetic labour' or 'body work' to address the way in which the mobilization of emotion in the work place involves the management and deployment of

[32] The importance of gendered and classed pre-dispositions is also evident in Bates' (1990) study of students on YTS programmes in elderly care. Those girls most likely to be recruited and then to adapt to the vocational culture were " [t]hose… from families in the most disadvantaged fractions of the working class: girls who had already had to care for elders or siblings, and had learned in particular to engage in self-denial rather than resistance to fulfill this role" (Colley, 2006:18).

[33] Walkowitz argues that these are played down in Hochschild's work with the result that workers are often represented as disembodied (Wolkowitz, 2006).

"the body's aesthetic qualities including deportment, style, accent, voice and sexual desirability" (Wolkowitz, 2006: 86). This may include the deliberate or tacit molding of workers' physicality and appearance in non-commercial work, as in the studies described above, or in commercial service organizations. According to Witz et al, corporations are not only concerned with the manufacture of feeling, rather:

> The labour of aesthetics is….a vital element in the…materialization of the aesthetics of a service organization and particularly of the 'style' of service experienced or consumed by customers (Witz et al, 2003:34)

Witz et al's case study of 'Elba Hotels', for instance, shows how workers are recruited on the basis of their potential to embody the 'company ethos' and how the induction process involves training in appropriate 'emotional skills', hairstyles and make-up. Employers "mobilize, develop and commodify… embodied dispositions….transforming them into skills which are geared towards producing a 'style' of customer service encounter that appeals to the customer (Witz et al, 2003:37)

In other contexts such as fashion retail, workers' 'look' plays an important role in communicating brand image. Nickson et al (2001) argue that at the 'top-end' of this market, the deployment of aesthetic styles is creating a 'labour aristocracy' as employers recruit young middle class men and women (often students seeking part time work) because the social, economic, cultural and corporeal capitals (see chapter four) they bring with them are more easily moldable into the kinds of dispositions required to communicate with affluent and aspirational customers. Whilst working class and older people may be able to learn the relevant dispositions, they are nevertheless disadvantaged. This resonates with Walkerdine's (2003) claim that for working class people, particularly women, competing in the labour market increasingly relies on investing in their appearance in order to look 'more middle class'.

However, the sidelining of gender in Nickson et al's analysis, on the grounds that both men and women perform the same work roles and are subjected to the same forms of

regulation, may well conceal how classed capitals are mobilized and rewarded in gendered ways. As Wolkowitz argues, “to say that work is not confined to either men or women is not to say that it is not gendered” (Wolkowitz, 2006:88).

In Adkin’s (1995) study of the tourist industry, the recruitment criteria for jobs in a leisure park were based on gendered expectations. Whilst strength or height were requirements for jobs seen as male, all women workers were subject to a set of gendered appearance criteria regardless of the occupation, and being heterosexually ‘attractive’ was deemed a necessity for women’s recruitment to jobs involving face-to-face work with male customers. Here, the boundaries between emotional, aesthetic and sexualized labour become particularly blurred (Warhurst et al, 2009) as they do in Pettinger’s (2005) study, in which female retail assistants were required to emphasize heterosexual femininity through make-up, hairstyle and demeanor, and in Taylor and Tyler’s (2000) research which found that female call centre operatives were required to respond politely to insulting and sexualized comments from male customers. These studies emphasize that the gendered performances required and reproduced in emotional/aesthetic labour are specifically heterogendered and, for women, (hetero)sexualized in ways that resonate with the materialist feminist stress on the appropriation of women’s sexuality by men in both the private and public spheres (Delphy,1993; Wittig, 2005).

Other studies have suggested that men in service occupations are also increasingly expected to perform in aestheticized ways. McDowell, for example, argues that male workers in the financial services sector are required to display a ‘sexy’ appearance suggesting, in her view, that men are now doing “gender in ways that parallel the social construction of femininity” (McDowell, 1997: 182). This notion resonates with the argument that the shift to an economy based on service industries and consumption has opened the way for a new ‘cultural feminization’ of the labour market. As Adkins points out, those that hold this view often see men’s aesthetic work as part of a broader ‘de-traditionalization’ of gender relations. However, the commodification and aestheticization of men’s bodies does not necessarily equate to the dismantling of

gender roles. Rather, Adkins (1995) and Adkins and Lury (1999) suggest that gender inequalities are retrenched through the way in which the performance of aestheticized and emotionalized workplace identities by men and women are differentially recognized and rewarded. Because these performances are understood as an expression of naturalized femininity, women are constrained against claiming it as a form of capital to be exchanged for a wage or status[34]. As Black puts it:

> Young men in particular are becoming increasingly aware of the rewards to be derived from achieving this workplace identity. In contrast, when women invest significant amounts of time, effort and economic outlay in achieving a similar performance their labour is seen as less of a skill to be rewarded, and more an imminent feminine characteristic (Black, 2004:135).

Whilst women may not reap the 'rewards' of aesthetic labour, they may be subject to sanctions of if they do not invest in their bodies and produce appropriately feminine aesthetic performances (Black, 2004). The studies by Delinger & Williams (1997) and Puwar (2004), discussed earlier, support this proposition as does Walkerdine's (2003) argument that working class women are increasingly obliged to manage their appearance in line with a middle class aesthetic in order to compete in a job market that in reality may offer them relatively few rewards and little chance of upward mobility.

In the context of the increasingly aestheticized nature of work and social life beauty therapy may play a particularly significant role. Black raises the possibility that as working class women move into putatively middle class jobs in the service sector they may increasingly make use of beauty therapy for maintaining an appropriately feminine and classed appearance. In this sense, beauty therapy "may be seen as service industry servicing the service industry in that it offers treatments which are required to

[34] [34] Men, on the other hand are "not assumed to have an already fixed or naturalized relationship between self and identity..... unlike women workers....men...were able to claim their workplace identity as their own property....which they were able to contract out and exchange...as culturally individualized workers, with performable identities" (Adkins & Lury, 1999:604).

either avoid sanctions or to gain reward in the workplace" (Black, 2004:136). The latter may partly explain why men are increasingly using beauty salons[35].

Black argues that beauty therapy can be placed alongside other services such as 'image consultancy' used by employers to 'restructure bodies' and produce 'confidence and expertise' amongst professional and service workers (Wellington & Bryson, 2001, cited in Black, 2004). This highlights the significance of beauty therapists as aesthetic, or 'body' workers in two senses- as performing work on their own bodies and directly on the bodies of clients (Wolkowitz, 2006). In this sense, their work involves both 'care of the self', in the sense of producing workplace subjectivities signified by particular expressions of bodily femininity, and 'care of others'. As workers on the bodies of others they perform a range of 'looking' treatments on clients whose needs are informed by an increasingly (hetero)sexualized and aestheticized culture and economy which has further entrenched the position of women as objects of the gaze. However, empirical studies suggest that beauty therapists construct their work in ways that efface its association with sexuality and appearance (Wolkowitz, 2006). Black's (2004) respondents, whilst keen to stress the importance of technical beauty skills, consistently emphasized the emotional components of their work; making people 'feel better about themselves' or 'giving happiness'. The proliferation of 'feeling treatments' allows beauty therapists to position their work as more akin to that of non-commercial health professionals[36]. Wolkowitz interprets this construction of beauty work as one based on the idea of the 'deficit body'- a body lacking not in beauty but one "deficient in the self –love and confidence that workers see themselves as helping to restore" (Wolkowitz, 2006: 152). Such discourses appear to be central to the 'professionalization project' within beauty therapy in as much as they allow workers to

[35] Beauty Industry organizations have been keen to point out the 'new male market' for beauty products and services. The Guild of Beauty Therapists, attribute to this demand to the influence of the culture and media industries: "With reality television programs like The Only Way is Essex, Desperate Scousewives…and Made in Chelsea showing impeccably groomed men… it is becoming more and more acceptable for men to take pride in their appearance….Men taking care of themselves can only be seen as a good thing (Guild of Beauty Therapists, 2012).

[36] As does the deployment of beauty therapists by the National Health service to work in hospitals with female patients recovering from surgery or with 'disfiguring conditions' (Sharma & Black, 2001)

dissociate their practice from 'feminine vanity', 'superficiality' and sexual attractiveness. This may partly account for the way in which sexuality in women's relationship to beauty is an "an absent present" (Black, 2004:98) in the narratives of Black's beauty workers. Nevertheless, this absence is always underpinned by tacit references to normative heterosexuality as a "default position, presumed and uncommented upon" (Ibid: 98). Sexuality was 'outed' only in cases where heterosexuality was breached by male clients assumed to be gay or transsexual, or where workers feared that it might be enacted by male clients expecting a sexualized service.

Whilst the empirical work on beauty has tended to focus on emotional rather than aesthetic labour, Black gives some space to kinds of appearance expected of beauty therapists. The generic 'look' mirrors that required of many other female workers in low status, low paid jobs which include contact with the public- neat, clean, and attractive in normative heterosexual terms (Adkins, 1995). The precise appearance code will vary depending on the type of establishment but Black's account suggest that it is likely to mirror the tensions implicit in the concept and practices of beauty therapy. A 'clinicized' appearance (for example, a white overall) signifying a therapeutic role is often blended with an aesthetic that emphasizes femininity with subtle make up and well-groomed hair. However, "there are dangers in travelling too far in the direction of sexualization" (Black, 2004:123). Given the increased numbers of male clients, Black argues, this would run the risk of associating beauty therapy with "the sordid connotations of the massage parlour" (Ibid:123). Clearly this is an important gender violence issue, and one which has received little attention in the literature on beauty work. However, workers responses to this threat might also be shaped by concerns with emphasizing the 'respectability' of beauty therapy through an appearance code that reflects a middle class-inflected feminine aesthetic, disavowing the overt sexual display associated with working class femininity.

Black's argument that beauty therapy is 'gendered but not sexualized' work appears to be based on this regulation of appearance and on what seems to be a less than critical acceptance of her participants' perspectives on their work as being about 'feelings'

rather than ‘looks’. It also misses the way in which gender is always caught up in sexuality and is itself a heterosexual construct (Wittig, 2005; Jackson, 2001). If sexuality is an ‘absent present’ in their narratives, then it may also be a hidden aspect of the labour they perform on their own and others’ bodies. An understated performance of feminine (hetero)sexuality is a sexual performance none the less, and one that is commodified to embody the ‘ethos’ of beauty culture as played out in particular beauty salons, even if it is not meant to appeal ‘erotically’ to the senses of female salon users or to be consumed as an ‘eroticized’ service in the way that male customers might consume the sexualized performances expected of female leisure workers or waitresses (Adkins, 1995; Hall, 1993). Rather, it could be argued that (at least some) female salon users are purchasing heterosexual attractiveness which will be ‘consumed’ by men outside the salon, at work or at home. In this sense, the possibility that beauty therapy constitutes a form of sexualized labour may be a question worth pursuing.

Conclusion

Appearance practices in a broad sense play a key role in the cultural reproduction of (hetero)sexual difference and hierarchy. However, feminist perspectives which emphasize the feminine body as a material effect of power and a site of social constraint have been criticized for representing women as ‘cultural dopes’. This tendency to set the ‘choices’ women make against systematic power relations obscures the way in which investments in beauty practices and subjective experiences of pleasure or ‘empowerment' may be caught up in gendered, classed and racialized inequalities and may be essential in the production of women both as ‘desiring subjects’ and objects of the gaze. Voluntaristic models of agency undercut the idea that beauty practices and the discourses that support them are harmful to women, and may constitute forms of violence. However, to ignore these possibilities is to collude in the dominant and potentially imperialist assumption that cultural practices in liberal Western democracies are engaged in ‘freely’, and to fail to grasp the more subtle ways in which domination, and indeed violence, may work under conditions of modernity. The

connections between power, agency and subjectivity are examined further in chapter four whilst its implications for understanding the operation of violence are discussed in chapter five.

Feminist work on both sides of the pleasure/domination divide has often underplayed or ignored the way in which women's appearance practices are shaped by their social locations in relation to class, 'race' and other axes of inequality. Work specifically addressing this has shown how white women from dominant groups have at various points in history used their bodies to signal status and to position themselves against marginalized women. In the context of late modernity, middle class women's greater access to material and cultural resources may mean that they are more able to use beauty practices as tools of reflexive self- production. However, because the body is vital as a form of capital for women, those with less material or cultural resources may also invest in appearance to produce 'respectable' or 'appropriate' performances, as a way of dis-identifying with working class or other marginalized femininities (Skeggs, 1997), in order to signal a political resistance to dominant norms, or in an attempt to gain advantage or to avoid sanctions in the workplace. Beauty practices are historically specific and exist "at a congested crossroads of forces" (Craig, 2006:160) which makes it impossible to disentangle them from structures of classed and racialized inequalities. However, there is also evidence to suggest that appearance constitutes a master status for women across class and racialized divides and that the body is increasingly significant as a marker of normative heterosexual femininity.

Chapter Four

Theorizing the Body, Subjectivity and Domination in late Modernity: materialist feminist critiques and appropriations of 'malestream' theories

Introduction

This chapter discusses the key concepts and theories informing this study. It introduces some materialist feminist critiques and appropriations of two key theoretical frameworks for understanding the production of subjectivity, agency and embodied experience and relations of domination: Foucault's theories of disciplinary power and the reflexive subject and Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. Both have been widely used to understand the significance accorded to the body as a key source and marker of identity/subjectivity in the context of the late 20th and early 21st Century. The purpose of this chapter is to identify elements of these frameworks which may be useful for understanding the issues at the centre of this research.

Part one defines the concept of materialist feminism as I use it in this thesis as the basis of my theoretical framework. Part two briefly addresses the way in which feminism has politicized the body and outlines some of the tensions between materialist approaches and later post-structuralist understandings of the embodied subject and its relationship to power. In part three I turn to Foucault's understanding of power and subjectification and draw on feminist readings of this to argue that whilst it is also extremely useful in explaining the significance of feminine beauty and other social practices in terms of how modern power operates through disciplinary regimes, it is problematic in a number of

ways, not least in relation to the voluntarism implied in 'reflexive subject' of Foucault's later work. In part five I return to Bourdieu's theory of practice, introduced in chapter two. Again, I draw on feminist critiques of this framework to identify ways in which the concepts of habitus, field and capital can be used to understand how young women may come to embrace or resist gendered and classed 'destinies'. Bourdieu's understanding of the connection between power, the construction of agency and the reproduction of gender and class also provides a springboard for thinking about how social practices, including those associated with beauty and education, might be embedded in different forms of violence, the subject of chapter five.

Materialist feminism: debates and tensions

Although I make considerable use of theory from outside of feminism, my analysis of interviews and observations with beauty therapy students and their tutors is underpinned by a materialist feminist theoretical framework. I use the term 'materialist feminism' to name perspectives which understand gendered/sexed power relations as predominantly rooted in the material and structural rather than the cultural and discursive, though not reducible to any single cause (Jackson, 2001). In the early work of Marxist feminists such as Michele Barratt and Mary McIntosh (1979), the material is understood in largely economic terms, with the economic as being essentially reducible to capitalism (Jackson, 2001)[37]. Other feminists challenged both the economic determinism of this approach and its "limited understanding of what constitutes the economic domain" (Adkins & Leonard, 2005:8). Most notably, French radical materialist feminism extended the definition of the economic and material beyond the class relations involved in the production of goods and services to include a range of social practices organized on the basis of sex. In this context, sexuality, violence, the body, motherhood, work and language have been understood not simply as cultural or

[37] This tendency held that all forms of oppression under capitalism, including those connected to gender, proceeded from the contradictions between labour and capital. From this perspective, women's unpaid domestic labour and exploitation in paid work serves the interests of capitalism, with gender itself being constituted as a cultural, ideological formation imposed on the 'natural' categories of sex (Adkins & Leonard, 2005).

ideological phenomena, but as social-political practices of gendered production. The idea that patriarchy constitutes a specific set of exploitative material relations based on the contradictions between the categories 'man' and 'woman' derives from the argument that far from being a natural, biological reality, 'sex' is 'a sign' which marks the social division between men and women (Delphy, 1993) or "a political category that founds society as heterosexual" (Wittig, 2005:20). As such, it is a product rather than a precursor of oppression. On this view, 'gender' as a set of culturally prescribed roles, precedes and constructs the categories of sex - an inversion of the assumptions of sex role theorists such as Margaret Mead and Ann Oakley, as well as Marxist feminists. In this theoretical context, the ideological is not separated from the material realm as an "autonomous empirical category" (Guillaumin, 2005:75). Rather the category of sex is the "mental form taken by certain determined social relationships" (Ibid:75). In this sense, radical materialist feminism challenges the dualisms between objective and subjective structures, and between idealism and materialism in a way that resonates with Bourdieu's theory of practice.[38]

Whilst the emergence, in the late 1980s, of post-modern and post-structuralist feminist critiques of the stable subject and 'grand' structural theory have been extremely problematic for materialist analyses, it is also arguably the case that much of the critique of stable gender categories was already a central feature of materialist feminism. Consequently, Jackson (2001) suggests, these tensions have created the intellectual space for a more nuanced and eclectic materialist feminism. This includes an increased sensitivity towards everyday social practices and interactions in the production of gender in intersection with other dimensions of inequality, the localised material

[38] Adkins and Leonard (2005) argue that whilst the later work of some Marxist feminists, for instance Cockburn (1991), have attempted to address the inadequacies of an economic reductionist model, their continued separation of gender from the economic and material resulted in analyses which loses sight of material. In some cases, early second wave Marxist feminists not only "abandoned the search for a material analysis of gender, they have also articulated a full scale critique of materialism in feminism, and beyond" (Adkins & Leonard, 2005:9). In the context of this 'turn to culture' in which the material was displaced by an emphasis on the cultural and discursive, criticisms of materialist feminism ironically focused on the economic reductionism originally defended by Barratt and others and the on the essentialism of the sex/ gender distinction (Butler, 1990; 1992). French radical materialist feminism became subsumed in this definition of materialism and so its critics have often overlooked the radically anti -essentialist and anti-reductionist direction of their work (Adkins & Leonard, 2005; Jackson, 2001).

conditions of women's lives, questions of agency and subjectivity, and a recognition that "social structures are themselves perpetuated through human practices" (Jackson 2001:287). Whilst recognizing the problems involved in imposing categories on the diversity of feminist theory, I nevertheless take Jackson's understanding of what constitutes the social as a working definition of the concerns of materialist feminism and as a basis for theorizing the 'choices', experiences and identities of participants and the practices and discourses of beauty therapy courses:

> …the social encompasses all aspects of social life, from structural inequalities to everyday interaction. It is concerned with meaning, both at the level of our wider culture and as it informs our everyday social life. It includes subjectivity because our sense of who we are in relation to others constantly guides our actions and interactions and, conversely, who we are is in part a consequence of our location within gendered, class, racial and other divisions, and of the social and cultural milieu. (Ibid: 284)

Feminism, domination and the body

Interest in 'the body' has been a central theme in feminist thought since the late 1960s. Bordo credits early second wave (North American) feminism with pioneering the challenge to traditional naturalistic conceptualizations of the body within Western thought and resituating it on the terrain of the social: as a "politically inscribed entity…shaped by histories and practices of containment and control" (Bordo, 2003:21). This has made it possible to theorize a range of gendered practices, including forms of male violence against women, compulsory heterosexuality and practices associated with feminine 'beautification', not as manifestations of women's or men's essential 'natures', or as voluntary behaviours, but as instances of social power relations in which the female body provides the territory on which male dominance and female submission is established. Bordo sees this conceptual shift as a "crucial historical moment in the… articulation of a new understanding of sexual politics of the body" (Ibid:23) which has

facilitated not only an understanding of how power is directed at gendered bodies but how it produces gendered, classed and racialized subjects. As McNay has argued, the concept of embodiment in feminist thought has been so centrally important because it challenges both the Cartesian dualism between mind and body, and the still tenacious dichotomy between determinism and voluntarism (McNay, 1999).

One of the key characteristics of early 'second wave' feminism is its focus on the 'material body' constructed through institutionalized, structural power relations and cultural practices, including those associated with beauty, appearance and sexuality. Through this we learn what Bordo calls "the practices and habits of everyday life" (Bordo, 2003:16). Though this 'material' body continues to figure in feminist work, it came under a sustained attack by post-structuralist and post-modern influenced feminist perspectives because of its alleged essentialism, its 'top down' conception of power, and its supposed lack of attention to agency, diversity, and inequalities between women. These perspectives have tended to eschew readings which stress hegemonic, structural power relations and systematic patterns in women's experiences of inequality and instead have understood the body and subjectivity primarily as productions of cultural texts and discourses, analyzing gender in terms of localised, fluid readings of the gendered body.

In keeping with this, much contemporary feminist scholarship references non-feminist post-structuralist writers, particularly Foucault, as the main theoretical inspirations in sociological and cultural analyses of the body (Grimshaw & Arthurs, 1999; Walkowitz, 2006). Whilst these have arguably been crucial in understanding the construction of the gendered body/self and women's investment in bodily femininity, they are not, according to Bordo, as foundational to the politicization of the body as we are now led to believe. The idea of the body as "the focal point for struggles over the shape of power" (Johnson, cited in Bordo, 2003:17) "was discovered by feminism, and long before it entered into its marriage with poststructuralist thought" (Bordo, 2003:17).

For some materialist feminists, this theoretical 'marriage' has "emptied the concept of gender of its social import as a hierarchical division between men and women" (Jackson, 2001). However, Jackson argues that during the 1990s many feminists began to problematize the 'cultural turn' (Ibid: 286) developing approaches which combined a critique of extreme anti-materialist positions with a 're-visioning' of structural analyses, acknowledging that material and social relations cannot be understood solely in terms of structure. On the basis of this, materialist feminists have criticized and appropriated theoretical tools from outside of feminism (Moi, 1991). The result has been a diverse body of work addressing the complex workings of structural power relations at micro-levels in the production of gendered and classed subjectivity, agency and embodied experience. In the following discussion, I consider how feminist appropriations of two of these perspectives might provide useful tools for understanding how the 'choices', identities and trajectories of the young women in this study are produced.

Feminist readings of Foucault

One aspect of Foucault's work which has particular relevance for exploring women's relationship to the body, femininity and beauty is the concept of disciplinary power. According to Foucault, this is a specifically modern form of power which relies less on direct and visible forms of physical control or material constraints - modes of domination characteristic of earlier forms of feudal and 'sovereign' power (Foucault, 1995). Firstly, disciplinary power is exercised through surveillance. Foucault visualizes modern institutions as regulating and normalizing individual behavior and desire, and producing "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Ibid, 1995:138) through systems of supervision in which individuals and their activities are constantly under observation. Whilst the surveillant might be a factory supervisor, a prison warder, teacher or psychiatrist , individuals, knowing they will be observed but not knowing, at any given moment, if they are under the supervisory gaze, put themselves under surveillance. This self-surveillance is a consequence of what Foucault terms 'the unequal gaze' which produces "a state of a conscious and permanent visibility that assures the

automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1995: 201). As discussed in chapter three, the idea has been applied by a number of feminist social theorists to what appears to be an increasingly intense concern amongst women with bodily appearance (Frost, 2001; Bordo, 2003; Bartky, 1990) . From these perspectives, the narcissistic relationship to the body encouraged by disciplinary power is conducted "against a background of a pervasive sense of bodily deficiency" which "accounts for what is often [the] compulsive or even ritualistic character" (Bartky, 1990:72) of women's use of beauty practices.

Secondly, disciplinary power is productive. The technologies and discourses which target the bodies of individuals (for instance, those connected with sexuality, health and, in this context, feminine beautification) produce "the very subjectivity of the subject" (Bartky, 1990: 79), selves/bodies which generate their "own governance… transferring power from direct repression" (Skeggs, 2004a: 78). Foucault displaces a negative conception of power with one that emphasizes how modern power works through the construction of 'new' capacities and modes of activity rather than by limiting or repressing pre-existing ones (Sarup, 1993). So, for instance, the activities associated with beauty do not repress or disguise 'natural' femaleness but instead are part of what produces the historically specific gendered self/body and its pleasures and desires which do not exist prior to the discourses which produce it. A feminist reading of Foucault allows us to conceive of beauty as a technology of feminine self-surveillance which women exercise 'over and against themselves' in the production of 'docile bodies'. Whilst some feminist analyses have tended to emphasize external constraints coercing conformity with beauty standards and practices, using Foucauldian tools allows us to address the question of how social and cultural forces 'get inside' consciousness to create a female subjectivity "which disempowers us even as it seduces us" (Bartky, 1990:2). This approach, then, reveals how the 'truths' of sexual difference and heterosexuality have been historically constructed and have real and material effects on lived and embodied experience (Holland et al., 1998).

Feminist readings of Foucault such as Bartky's and Frost's retain a materialist analysis of power in which the micro-level production of embodied femininity takes place within a

wider context of male dominance, female submission and the power relations of capitalism. Foucault, however, would have us adopt a different analysis: disciplinary power is “dispersed and anonymous; there are no individuals formerly empowered to wield it; it is...invested in everyone and in no one in particular (Bartky, 1990:79). This perspective allows us to see how, in the absence of direct coercion, the female body becomes subject to ‘a machinery of power’ which regulates its “size and contours, its appetite, posture, gestures, and general comportment in space and the appearance of each of its visible parts” (Ibid, 1990:80). It is also useful in understanding the way in which beauty therapy students are positioned as both subject to forms of power exercised over them (as young, mostly working class women, and as trainees in a low status and low paid industry), and as apprentices of techniques and discourses which will allow them to exercise certain forms of disciplinary power over other women. Arguably, however, the idea that power is located everywhere makes it difficult to identify the systematic relations involved in maintaining women’s investments in femininity and in producing the conditions under which some women are more likely to become workers who service other women’s desire for bodily femininity. Nancy Fraser argues that Foucault’s approach to power as adhering in all social relations is “normatively neutral” (Fraser, 1989:28) and, as such, it fails to provide the tools necessary for criticizing power structures. Similarly, Nancy Hartsock points to the contradictory nature of Foucault’s understanding which both claims “that individuals are constituted by power relations, but [argues] against their constitution by relations such as the domination of one group by another” (Hartsock, 1990:169). In this sense, Foucault’s account “makes room only for abstract individuals, not women, men, or workers (Ibid:169). The same tension is evident in Bordo’s suggestion that we should use Foucault’s framework to understand how power “produces and normalizes bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination” (Bordo, 2003:17) whilst simultaneously ceasing “to imagine ‘power’ as the possession of individuals or groups” (Ibid, 2003:26). Indeed, her own acknowledgement that this model has limited use for understanding direct forms of male violence against women suggests that unless we take different manifestations of power into account our understanding of it remains incoherent.

A major criticism of Foucault's work is that in defining the subject simply as an effect of power, it fails to account for the possibility of a liberatory subjectivity (Fraser, 1989). Foucault's claim that the operation of power which produces 'docile bodies' is also the genesis of resistance is, according to Fraser, incoherent. McNay suggests that this problem of agency springs from Foucault's failure to theorize the materiality of the body with the result that it is largely conceived of as a "blank surface upon which power relations are inscribed" (McNay, 1999:96). However, some theorists argue that his later work, in which the focus shifts away from discipline and technologies of power to the 'care' and production of the self (Foucault, 1985), represents a "radical break with his previous conceptions of subjectivization"…[and] a tantalizing sense of the possibility of freedom" (Starky & Hatchuel, 2002:647). This is because the question of primary interest to Foucault in this work is how individuals come to experience themselves as 'desiring subjects' through 'technologies of the self'; self-conscious, reflexive practices which regulate and construct individuality through bodies, thoughts and conduct, and which "create new modes of being distinct from those imposed by the workings of power regimes" (Ibid: 642):

> Individuals are no longer conceived of as docile bodies in the grip of an inexorable disciplinary power, but as self-determining subjects who are capable of challenging and resisting structures of domination in modern society (McNay, 1992:4)

Within this framework, practices of the self are envisaged as taking place "in contexts stripped, as far as any context can be, of the dysfunctional aspects of power relations" (Starky & Hatchuel, 2002:643) and the exercise of freedom through these practices "involves enhancement of the ability to experience pleasure" (Ibid: 642). This is particularly relevant to the domination/pleasure debate on beauty, discussed in chapter three. If beauty practices are considered as technologies aimed at the self -production of identity, pleasure and wellbeing, then they can be seen as constituting practices of freedom and resistance, as Davis (1995) and Gimlin (2002) suggest. However, given

that beauty practices are inseparable from relations of gender and class, as these theorists would agree, it would be extremely difficult to argue that they could ever take place outside of power relations. McNay (1999) argues that rather than being a radical departure from his early theories of power, the 'reflexive subject 'of Foucault's later work remains mired in the same lack of attention to embodiment which, in this case, results in a radically voluntaristic notion of agency which gives the impression that "identity.....is fully amenable to a process of self-stylization" (McNay, 1999:3). In this sense Foucault's conception of power is caught in the same kind of dilemma as much feminist theorizing of agency, exemplified by the domination/pleasure dichotomy:

> …either we limn the structural constraints of gender so well that we deny women any agency or we portray women's agency so glowingly that the power of subordination evaporates (Fraser, 1992:17).

The voluntarism in Foucault's work resonates with the theories of individualization put forward by Giddens (1991), Beck (1992), Beck-Gernsheim (2002), Bauman, (2002) and others. They have pointed to the way in which human identity in late modern society "is being transformed from a 'given' into a 'task'" (Bauman, 2002:xv) involving the kinds of reflexive self-production discussed in chapter two in relation to neo-liberal models of education, and in chapter three in relation to the aestheticization of social life . However, the individualization thesis has tended to uphold the notion that these process, to greater or lesser extents, have the potential to transform traditional power relations through an "enlargement of freedom and choice" (McRobbie, 2004: 260) as individuals are supposedly released from constraints of class and gender as traditional social structures and community ties are eroded[39].

[39] Walkerdine argues that the economic restructuring underlying these shifts, the decline of state welfare provision and the bolstering of a neo-liberal economic model has led to "the complete collapse of civil society" (Walkerdine, 2003:241) and has been normalized by governmental discourses aimed at producing social subjects who embody "the Robinson Crusoe economic man of liberalism (even if that man is now female)... who can cope without strong community roots...[and who is]...responsible for their own lives through networks of social capital (Ibid, 2003:241).

Feminist critiques of Foucault's reflexive self are echoed in those levelled at these theorists of individualization. As Walkerdine (2003) suggests, the ssubject of neo-liberal choice "is an impossible fiction", not least because the ideology of individual freedom and meritocratic upward mobility on which it is premised is belied by evidence of the entrenched nature of income and wealth inequality and low levels of vertical social mobility in the UK (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). However, "it is a fiction constantly held up as possible" (Walkerdine, 2003:241) so that the incitements to become an 'entrepreneur of oneself' (du Gay, 1996, cited in Walkerdine, 2003: 240), a 'free', upwardly mobile consumer who transcends the traditional boundaries of gender, class and race, inevitably produce failure which is lived as personal inadequacy, particularly for those in socially disadvantaged positions. It is these incitements, together with the pathologization of failure, which in large part account for what some feminists have identified as the "distress experienced by working class women in their bid for upward mobility, or even simple respectability" (Ibid, 2003:242; Skeggs, 1997; McRobbie, 2004; 2009; Baker, 2009; Gonick, 2007). As Lash argues, whilst reflexivity might produce 'winners', it also produces 'losers' (Lash, 1994, cited in Adkins, 2002).

Bourdieu and the reproduction of domination

In response to the way that theories of the reflexive self have ignored or underplayed the embodiment of structural power relations or, in the case of Foucault's disciplinary power, presented the subject as simply an effect of discourse, some feminists have drawn on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. This, McNay (1999; 2004) argues, has important implications for feminist theory because it allows us to conceptualize the gendered and classed subject as neither fully determined by social forces nor self-constructed but rather the product of dynamic relations between embodiment of the social world and social practices. Of particular relevance to a materialist feminist understanding of the body/self is the way in which Bourdieu conceptualizes subjectivity as a product of "the subtle inculcation power relations upon the bodies and dispositions of individuals" (McNay, 1999:5). Through this incorporation of "the social into the corporeal" (Ibid,

1999:5) ‘objective’ structures, including gender and class, are reproduced through the actions of individuals. It is this focus on social reproduction at micro levels which accounts for the difficulties involved in social change and this, in McNay’s (Ibid, 1999) terms, is one of the key strengths of Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Whilst Foucault asks how power works in society, the key questions for Bourdieu concern social reproduction, who has power, and how they maintain it. These questions are addressed through the concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘capital’, ‘field’ and, as I discuss in chapter five, ‘symbolic violence’.

Habitus and the gendered and classed body

The concept of habitus, discussed in chapter two in relation to educational decision making, offers conceptual tools for transcending the oppositions, deeply rooted in much social theory, between subjectivism and objectivism, body and mind, and agency and structure. In essence, it creates a conceptual bridge between these opposing terms. The dialectic between habitus and social structure means that individuals are neither fully determined in any mechanistic sense, structuralist sense, nor free, in the sense assumed by theories which presuppose the rationality of action (Hatcher, 1998; Adams, 2003). This clearly has implications for the choice versus oppression debate in relation to beauty practices, as discussed in chapter three, as it does for understanding educational decision making. However, the improvisatory nature of habitus can engender an illusion of freedom together with an illusion of necessity, a subjective understanding of social practices and the power relations on which they are based, as natural or inevitable universals rather than arbitrary impositions. In this sense, habitus entails a ‘forgetfulness’ of the social origins of practices and schemas and so, in Bourdieu’s terms, is ‘history turned into nature’ or “genesis amnesia” which, for Bourdieu, defines the unconscious nature of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977:79)

Bourdieu suggests that the sexual division and hierarchy between men and women provide a limiting case of this ‘amnesia’. Gender is the ‘labour of dehistoricization’ which

produces the "objective and subjective structures of masculine domination" (Bourdieu, 2001:82-83). It is "only after a formidable collective labour of diffuse and continuous socialization that the distinctive identities instituted by the cultural arbitrary are embodied in habitus" (Ibid, 2001:23).[40] Where femininity is concerned, contemporary beauty and appearance practices in late capitalist societies appear to mirror Bourdieu's reading of Kabylian cultural[41] practices in which the 'inscription of dispositions' on the body involves an 'apprenticeship' in the "female 'art of living'…inseparably corporeal and moral" (Ibid, 2001:27).

> This apprenticeship is all the more effective because it remains essentially tacit: femininity is imposed for the most part through an unremitting discipline that concerns every part of the body and is continuously recalled through the constraints of clothing or hairstyle. (Ibid, 2001:27)

Here, Bourdieu reads very much like Foucault on the effects of disciplinary power in "gaining access to individuals...to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions" (Foucault, 1977:151-152). However, although he scarcely acknowledges the feminist heritage of such ideas, Bourdieu's arguments also resonate particularly with the work of the French radical materialist feminists. Wittig, for example, understands the workings of power in terms of how it produces and naturalizes social subjects in correspondence with the objective structures of heterosexual patriarchy arguing that women's "bodies as well as our minds are the product of this manipulation" (Wittig, 1988b: 440). As this suggests, one of the premises that Bourdieu's work shares with materialist feminism is that social relations 'take hold' of people at the level of embodiment. Habitus neither functions primarily at a conscious or explicit level nor is simply inscribed on the surface of bodies through discourse. Rather dispositions and generative schemas are embodied in a deeper ways which are pre-reflexive and practical (Jenkins, 1992).

[40] This has resonances with the idea proposed by Juliette Mitchell and other feminists using psychoanalytic theories that patriarchy is a structure of the unconscious (Mitchell, 1974).

[41] In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu discusses his study of the culture of the Kabylian peoples of Algeria and the Bearnaise region of France. This study also forms the basis of his analysis of sexual difference, symbolic violence and male power in *Masculine Domination* (2001).

Habitus is 'in the heads' of agents but it also exists in practical interaction with the world through language, bodily deportment, productive activities and so on.

It is through these processes that the social divisions attain what Bourdieu calls 'doxa': the character of fundamental, deeply embedded and unconscious beliefs, which "structure and underpin the different social fields, and hence inform how embodiment takes place" (Skeggs, 2004a: 22). For Bourdieu, doxic beliefs are turned into 'bodily hexis', a concept which emphasizes the way in which habitus works to internalize unconsciously learned practical characteristics: deportment, gestures, emotions, 'tastes', 'styles of the flesh' (behaviours or bodily appearances which may signify class as well as, or together with, gender) which are rooted in an agent's position in social structures but also allows those relations to take on "the appearance of a law of nature" (Bourdieu, 2001:23). The concepts of habitus and 'body hexis' have also been used to theorize the ways in which emotions such as shame (Bourdieu, 2001; Probyn, 2004; McRobbie, 2004) and feelings of self-depreciation (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1994) are produced through relations of gender and class and embodied as such. To this, we could add women's experiences of the 'pleasures and pains' connected to beauty practices and the ways in which these might function to reproduce normative femininity[42].

It is partly this focus on the way in which social structure produces and, in a sense, becomes the lived body which makes Bourdieu's framework potentially invaluable for investigating the role of beauty practices, and the social spaces in which they are learned or enacted, in producing gendered and classed subjectivities. However, it is also arguably problematic in that in its emphasis on the reproduction of the social world through the bodies of agents it "fails to provide us with a conceptualization of subjectivity that, ultimately, would allow for critical agency" (Mottier, 202:354). Indeed, some feminists have argued that Bourdieu ignores the complexity of contemporary

[42] However, emotions may function in different ways as forms of resistance to the dominant symbolic and to habitus. Skeggs (2004) points to the anger of working class and marginalized people as a response to oppressive social conditions and Probyn (2004) argues that shame of can function to prompt the privileged to critique the dominant order and their position within it.

western gender relations and the diverse forms of resistance to them (Moi, 1991). Whilst I agree this is the case, his theory of sexual difference does seem to have some purchase on the question of why, even in the context of feminist activism and scholarship, as well as in everyday instances of women's resistance or refusal to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant (Skeggs, 2004a), the idea of a fundamental dichotomous (hetero)sexual difference remains a given, or is treated as so deeply ingrained as to be beyond remedy or willed control, at least beyond Queer parodic performance (Butler, 1990)[43] This is, of course, precisely Bourdieu's point, though one which is also debatable, as I discuss in chapter five.

The dialectic of subjective and objective structures: habitus and field

In Bourdieu's view, social space is composed of 'fields', structured social arenas in which individuals and institutions are engaged in struggles over access to specific social, cultural and material resources or capitals (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Principally, for Bourdieu, these are the economic, political, cultural and academic arenas of social production but the notion of field can also be applied to occupational or professional arenas (McCall, 1992; Bourdieu, 2010), and to the family which Bourdieu sees as site in which "economic, cultural and symbolic privileges" (Bourdieu, 1996, cited in Chambers, 2005) are transmitted[44]. As discussed in chapter three, the 'fashion–beauty complex' which directly targets the female body has also been seen as a

[43] Judith Butler's understanding of political agency proposes that individuals can resist structures of power by participating in them in 'subversive' ways, for instance through the 'gender –parodying' practices of drag (Butler 1990). This has resonances with Bourdieu's notion of 'regulated liberties'- "actions that arise in the context of the existing social order, but which subvert or resignify it in some way" (Chambers, 2005: 338). The idea also resonates with Foucault's notion of 'reverse discourse' (Foucault, 1990). However, in Bourdieu's view, the emancipatory potential of such practices is limited by the fact that "they take place from *within* the dominant context and corresponding habitus" (Chambers, 2005:339).

[44] However, although he sees the sexual division of labour in the home as significant in the inculcation of gender in childhood (Bourdieu, 1990), elsewhere, and in contrast to some feminists (for instance, Okin, 1989; Delphy & Lennard, 1992), he focuses on the reproductive role of the domestic sphere in relation to class rather than gender, the production of which he attributes to "agencies such as the school or the state where principles of domination that go on to be exercised within even the most private universe are developed and imposed" (Bourdieu, 2001:4)

dominant force in the reproduction of femininity (Bartky, 1990) and the symbolic retrenchment of class relations through women's bodies (McRobbie, 2009) and so could be understood as a significant social field in this respect.

The logics and structures of a field are "both the product and producer of the habitus which is both specific and appropriate to that field" (Jenkins, 1992:84) and limit action on the basis of the volume and type of capital which an individual is able bring to and accrue within it, and so their ability to 'play the game' according to the dominant meanings generated within the field. Embedded in habitus, these 'objective limits' become a subjective 'sense of limits' in terms of lived experiences and capacities within a field. For instance, an individual's position in relation to others in the field of education will have a profound effect on their ability, or even desire, to 'get on' at school and to gain the dispositions (a 'feel for the game') and qualifications which would guarantee further social and economic 'success'. Although Bourdieu sees fields as having varying degrees of autonomy with their own schemes of domination and legitimized values (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), they are also interconnected and cross-cut horizontally by what he refers to as the dominant 'field of power' in which the state, economy, education and elite cultural reproduction are embedded. It is these sites in which the material social divisions and the symbolic principles of gendered and classed power relations which structure all other fields are produced (Cohen, 2011).

Beauty therapy courses can be understood as situated in the intersections of several overlapping fields or sub-fields. Further education, as a sub-field of education, in which the two FE colleges are embedded is in turn shaped by government economic, education and employment policies impacting on the colleges and on aspects of the beauty courses from management structure and resources to curriculum and accreditation to pedagogical practice and the dispositions and expectations of students and tutors. Intersecting with the FE field is the beauty industry, part of the wider 'fashion-beauty complex' (Bartky, 1990), as the employment field targeted by the courses. However, whilst the dispositions of the participants in this study may be produced through their courses, they are also shaped in social spaces outside them: in

the family, schooling, and friendship networks, and through their engagement with various types of media and consumption of cultural goods, for instance fashion and beauty products, which position them as classed and gendered subjects/agents.

In Bourdieu's terms, gender, like class, does not constitute a "'pure' field in its own right" (Moi, 1991:1035). Rather, it can be understood as part of the general 'field of power' which operates differently and carries variable amounts of symbolic capital (legitimate status and power) in different fields. There is, therefore, "no such thing as pure "gender capital"[45]. Chambers (2005) develops this idea to argue that:

> …each field contains and enforces a set of gender rules...[which may be]… common to many other fields….or they may be specific to that….some fields may be more autonomous from gender rules than others, but… all fields embody some gender rules, and some gender rules apply in all fields (Ibid, 2005:333).

In the terms of this argument, the raison d'être of the 'fashion-beauty complex' may be the production of a normatively feminine habitus whilst the field of health and social care, for example, may be profoundly shaped by, but not as fundamentally reliant on or productive of gender in a way that would invalidate its existence if sexual difference as a basis for social organization did not exist. I realize that this is a contentious argument given the feminist insights into the deeply entrenched gendering (Cockburn, 1985; Glucksmann, 1990) or heterogendering (Adkins, 1995;; Adkins; Adkins & Lury, 1999) of work. However, my purpose in making such distinctions is to differentiate between the kinds of post-16 education and training options available to young women in terms of their potential to transform "the aspirations of…students into something less tightly bound by classed and gendered values and stereotypes" (Bloomer at al., 2002:16). As discussed in chapter two, there is some evidence that whilst particular types of

[45] Moi argues that the idea of gender as a socially variable category across different social fields differentiates feminist appropriations of Bourdieu from other forms of materialist feminism. However, even we accept this position, we can nevertheless assume that "under current social conditions and in most contexts maleness functions as positive and femaleness functions as negative social capital" (Moi, 1991: 1036).

vocational training, such as health care, are historically constructed through gendered, classed and racialized discourse and policy (Skeggs, 1997), reflexive and critical pedagogies can encourage self-reflection and a broadening of 'horizons for action' which may potentially challenge rather than simply reproduce dominant power relations. It is far less clear how such transformations could take place in the context of beauty therapy given its role in providing labour for an industry which is much more emphatically premised on the production and regulation of femininity.

Gender, class and consciousness: the operation of capitals

For Bourdieu, individuals' life chances are connected to the amount and type of 'capital' that they are able to accumulate. The resources referred to by the notion of capital are not just material since Bourdieu rejects the idea that social hierarchy and competition are based only on economic interests (Bourdieu, 1990; Topper, 2001)[46]. Economic capital refers to the amount of income and wealth possessed by individuals and groups whilst social capital refers to the resources available to people based on their social connections, networks and group memberships. Cultural capital exists in relation to these two forms, each of which can be converted into cultural capital, whilst cultural capital can be transformed into both economic and social capital.

According to Bourdieu's tripartite model, cultural capital exists firstly in an embodied state as durable bodily and cognitive dispositions[47]. Embodied cultural capital takes on

[46] The significance of habitus here is that it embodies "the accumulation (or not) of different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic), displayed as dispositions" (Skeggs, 2004:85). These structure social fields through the "distribution of their properties…which are capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder" (Skeggs, 1997:8)

[47] Whilst he tends to emphasize the way in which 'properties of the self' are 'passively inherited', for instance through early socialization, they may also be acquired in more conscious ways (Bourdieu, 2010), for example through intentionally adopting a particular style of dress, speech or bodily deportment to conform to the dominant norms of a field. However, the conscious acquisition of these properties does not necessarily imply a conscious recognition of the social relations which confer value on them.

an appearance of nature. Secondly, it exists “in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods” (Skeggs, 1997:8) including owned physical objects which may include art works, clothing or other personal accoutrements which can have symbolic significance, for instance, in terms of class position, or in relation to fashionability, style or sexual attractiveness. Thirdly, cultural capital includes educational qualifications (Skeggs: 1997) and other holdings which gain institutional recognition and are relevant to an individual’s ability to compete in the labour market. This form of capital has a particular significance in terms of its ability to be converted directly into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

In essence, then, cultural capital, like social and economic capital, is a resource in power relations which enables those with “high holdings [to] exercise power over those with less” (Lovell, 2004:51) and provides “some defense, however circumscribed, against domination” (Ibid, 2004:51). However, for cultural capital to be used as a form of power or privilege, it must first be transformed into symbolic capital “before it can be capitalized on” (Skeggs, 1997:8). Skeggs argues that masculinity and femininity carry different amounts of symbolic capital. Whilst masculinity and Whiteness are valued forms that can be ‘traded’ in various contexts to gain power, ‘feminine cultural capital’, which may include ‘attractiveness’ (corporeal capital) or dispositions toward caring and interpersonal relationships (emotional capital), typically yields fewer profits when traded, for instance, on the job market (Ibid, 1997). Reay (2000) and Colley (2006) draw on Nowotny’s (1981) notion of emotional capital as a form of feminine capital and an asset “which can be exchanged for other forms of capital within a particular field” (Colley, 2006: 27), for instance in paid childcare work. However, women’s oppression in patriarchal capitalist societies means that such resources cannot easily be deployed as capital “since women are generally positioned as subordinate players in all fields” (Ibid: 27). As Colley argues, this may have implications for understanding the role of vocational education in developing dispositions to emotional labour which can generally only be exchanged “ for very low wages; or for more cultural capital, but only for vocational courses and at institutions that are relatively low-status” (Ibid: 28).

Crucially, gendered forms of capital are also classed. For example, what counts as feminine 'attractiveness' may be defined in middle or upper class terms (McRobbie, 2004). Bourdieu (2010) suggests that corporeal capital is a class privilege since the ways in which the body is used in work or leisure, together with food 'preferences' and differential access to the time, money and inclination to engage in practices of self-presentation all determine the shape and bearing of an individual's body and thus "the chances of material or symbolic profit they can reasonably expect from it" (Ibid:201).

The symbolic value of gendered capital also depends on the relationship between sexed bodies and their gendered dispositions. McCall argues that a woman working in a 'man's job' may acquire masculine dispositions, but because she continues to be sex-stereotyped and vulnerable to social sanctions for 'acting like a man' it is questionable whether those dispositions, "can…unequivocally function as profitable capital" (Ibid, 1992:846). Echoing this, Dennisson (2010) argues that in the context of male-dominated work environments, the incongruity between women's assumed gender dispositions and the masculinized nature of the job creates a double bind in which neither the performance of masculine nor feminine dispositions are unambiguously validated. This scenario, McCall suggests, cannot be gender-neutralized since sex is not a symmetrical category. For example whilst the 'aestheticization' and 'emotionalization' of work has been associated with the 'feminization' of the workplace, some feminists have suggested that men are much more likely to be rewarded for their investments in corporal "presentation of self-identity" than women whose efforts are perceived as the enactment of a normalized or naturalized femininity (McDowell, 1997; Adkins, 1995; Adkins & Lury, 1999). Similarly, Cross and Bagilhole (2002) discuss the ways in which male privilege is maintained when men enter occupational areas traditionally 'dominated' by women. The 'refashioning' of masculinity to incorporate hitherto feminized characteristics has allowed men "to remain the dominant sex" (Segal, 1999, cited in Cross & Bagilhole, 2002 :223) and to capitalize on what Connell (1995) terms the 'patriarchal dividend' which shores up masculine privilege against potential

threats accompanying changes in gender relations[48]. The capital accumulating strategies available to men through different, and seemingly gender transgressive performances of masculinity may mean, as Bourdieu argues, that social changes in relation to gender may conceal more entrenched inequalities in the relative positions of men and women (Bourdieu, 2001). It is, as Jackson suggests, "the degree of difference and the forms of difference that are changing, not the idea that there is a difference" (Jackson, 2006:113), or that that difference is hierarchical.

Arguably, women do not just internalize femininity (as Bourdieu assumes) but rather the gender opposition itself (Emily Martin, 1987; Jackson, 2001). This may explain why not all girls "acquire the stigmata of femininity" (Lovell, 2000:17) as thoroughly as Bourdieu suggests. She discusses examples of women successfully 'passing as men' or participating 'as women with masculine dispositions' in male arenas to argue that there is not always a 'glove-like fit' between habitus and social position and that masculine dispositions have be used as profitable capital by women, even (occasionally) gaining social approval. However, the example of pre-pubescent girls positioning themselves as 'tomboys' against notions of normative femininity suggests just how double-edged such transgression can be when what allows the concept of tomboy to act as a "marker of respect", and as profitable capital, is the perceived superiority of maleness within an asymmetrical (hetero)gender binary[49]

For Skeggs, one of the most troubling aspects of Bourdieu's work is the 'model of self' on which the logic of practice rests: an "explicit model of accumulation, based on [tacit]

[48] Indeed men's entry into areas such as nursing or teaching may well be responsible for bolstering the status associated with them, at least for those at the top of these professions where men are disproportionately represented (Evans, 1996).

[49] Not only is this category "temporally bound in middle childhood [becoming] an increasingly repudiated category as girls grow older" (Renold, 2005, cited in Griffin et al., 2006:11), but, like the notion of 'girly-girl', it is located against masculinity as the unmarked norm (Griffin at al., 2006). Diane Reay's research on gendered identities in primary schools suggests that whilst self-defined 'tomboys' might be rejecting femininity and signaling a recognition of gender hierarchy, they are doing so in ways that ultimately acquiesce to the dominant gender order, particularly in disparaging other girls for their feminine behavior and attributing positive qualities of " fairness, honesty, integrity and strength"(Fine & Macphereson, 1992, cited in Reay, 2001) to masculinity.

knowledge of the game and how to play it" and a habitus which is always inclined to the accumulation of value although the stakes may be "non-material and not easily quantified" (Bourdieu, 1977, cited in Skeggs, 2004b:85). In this respect, Skeggs argues, Bourdieu's agent has similarities to the 'exchange-value self' of possessive individualism and rational action. This model implicitly refers to middle class subjects and their strategies in social space. In contrast, Bourdieu positions the working class habitus as "shaped by necessity and resignation" they are represented, Skeggs argues as "…lack, beyond value, without value, resigned and adjusted to their conditions, unable to accrue value to themselves" (Skeggs, 2004b:87). In her view, whilst this model may tell us a lot about how middle class advantage reproduces itself, it does not provide the tools to analyze working class struggles or expressions of frustration, anger and dissent which may point to value systems outside of the dominant symbolic and which are illegible within its terms. Just as Foucault sees all social subjects as being locked into networks of power, so Bourdieu's model does not allow dominated groups to experience anomie, to recognize social exclusion and to respond to this. For example, it has no purchase on the apparent disinterest in post-16 education which some young working class people exhibit (Ball et al, 2001), beyond the idea that they are simply resigned to 'failure'. The idea that the dominated make a 'virtue of necessity' may help us to understand why some young women may relinquish former aspirations and instead embrace low status, highly gendered training and employment, but it does not really help in understanding why some may express frustration and resentment at their situation and resist the attempts to instill in them an 'appropriate habitus for the job'.

In addition, Skeggs argues that Bourdieu's framework is inadequate for understanding why the working class women in her study invested in their appearance. Femininity, she suggests, was not primarily a matter of identification or internalized dispositions but, to some extent, a conscious performance aimed not at accumulating profit but at "flooring their circumstances" (Skeggs, 1997:102). In comparison with the limited opportunities available for accruing other forms of value "femininity may be able to accrue relatively high profit in some arenas (the institution of marriage and heterosexuality) whilst being simultaneously devalued in others'"(Ibid:102). However, as Skeggs suggests, in trading

appearance women are caught up in the paradox of femininity in which they are positioned both as subjects (individuals/persons) and as objects of exchange (stereotypes/non-persons).

Women as social subjects and objects of exchange

In Distinction (2010), Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) and Masculine Domination (2001) Bourdieu defines women not primarily as subjects of capital exchange but:

> ...as social objects, repositories of value and of capital, who circulate between men and who serve certain important functions in the capital accumulation strategies of families and kinship groups (Lovell, 2000:20)[50]

He argues that women display this capital through their own bodily appearance, through managing the 'public image' of family members (children and husbands), and through their role in looking after "the decor of everyday life, the house and its presentation" (Bourdieu, 2001: 100). It is partly through this sexual division of labour in marriage that the symbolic economy of sexual difference is constructed and transported into the public sphere. The "generally subordinate" (ibid, 2010: 101) positions they tend to take up and the disadvantages they face in the labour market are logical extensions of their roles in the domestic space of symbolic reproduction[51].

[50] Though he argues that men's capital accumulation through the exchange of women in marriage may have a more central significance in "the least differentiated societies" (Bourdieu, 2001:98), Bourdieu nevertheless maintains that women in contemporary western economies continue to perform a decisive function in converting economic capital into forms of symbolic capital through the display of cultural taste, or 'respectability' (Skeggs), at least where a family's economic capital places it at a "sufficient distance from necessity to participate in the struggle for symbolic capital" (Lovell, 2000:23).

[51] In this sense, Bourdieu perceives women, like the working class in general, in terms of lack:
"Women have in common the fact that they are separated from men by a negative symbolic coefficient which, like skin colour for blacks, or any other sign of membership of a stigmatized group, negatively affects everything they do". (Bourdieu, 2001:93)

However, some feminists have argued that in relying on abstract dichotomies, Bourdieu fails to take proper account of the different ways in which women actually engage in capital accumulating strategies in the labour market and in other social fields [52]. But though women may constitute themselves as subjects with value, when they enter spaces in which they are effectively 'outsiders within' (hooks, 2000) their positions can remain ambiguous and precarious, obliging them to acquire a habitus which "may be 'cleaved' or 'torn', "bearing the mark of the contradictions which produced [it]" (Bourdieu, 1997, cited in Hillier & Rooksby, 2005:13).

Although a key objection to Bourdieu's understanding of gender is that it sidesteps these kinds of ambivalences (Skeggs, 2004a), there is a sense in which his understanding of the social position of women is founded on the recognition of a fundamental ambiguity. Bourdieu does not argue that women cannot act as capital accumulating subjects. Indeed, he acknowledges the "substantive transformations...in the condition of women" (Bourdieu, 2001:88) including increased access to education and paid work, and "a degree of distance from domestic tasks (Ibid:88-89). However, where the labour market is concerned, he suggests that they continue to be concentrated in positions which are either quasi-extensions of their domestic roles (welfare, personal care, education) or located in the "domains of symbolic production" (media, journalism, artistic fields). In Bourdieu's terms, these are all areas in which "the logic of the economy of symbolic goods" (Bourdieu, 2001:94), in which women are constituted as (Ibid:63) "body-for-others", is reproduced. Because of this, women's

[52] Skeggs (2004b) points to two examples of feminist work in which the dominated, though deprived of a sense of entitlement, are able to position themselves as subjects in fields structured in the interests of the dominant. Lovell's (2000) discussion of the "cross-gender habitus" of the female soldier focuses on historically and culturally specific examples of women who either 'passed' as men or who were able to acquire a masculine habitus 'as women' sufficiently well to be recognized as 'legitimate' or 'honorary' participants' in male-only spaces. Secondly, Diane Reay (1997) indicates the ways in which classed processes have a differential impact on women's access to social, cultural and economic resources for helping their children make educational 'choices'. Her interviewees from working class backgrounds who had 'achieved' some degree of upward mobility through education still lacked the "self-certainty of the middle class habitus" (displayed unequivocally by the always middle class participants). However, they also refused to position themselves in ways that could have implied their inferiority, and did not display a habitus based on "the resignation of the inevitable" (Bourdieu, 1984, cited in ibid: 229).

access to symbolic capital is always compromised by their position in the symbolic economy of sexual difference:

> The social world functions....as a market in symbolic goods, dominated by the masculine vision: for women...to be is to be perceived, and perceived by the male eye or by an eye informed by masculine categories....to say of a woman in a position of power that she is 'very feminine' is just a particularly subtle way of denying her right to the specifically masculine attribute of power (Bourdieu, 2001: 99).

Rather than focusing on Bourdieu's denial of women's subject status, it might be more helpful to examine the way in which women, in acting as subjects of exchange, are obliged to continually negotiate the relative constancy (though not inevitability) of a symbolic order organized through the principles of (hetero)sexual difference and female objectification. This would bring Bourdieu closer to a materialist feminist understanding of the way in which many women live their bodies/selves as a contradiction between subjectivity and objectification and the way in which this contradiction functions as a mechanism of domination enacted at a psychosocial level. In Bartky's words;

> ....to be psychologically oppressed is to be caught in the double bind of a society which both affirms my human status and at the same time bars me from the exercise of many of those typically human functions that bestow that status (Bartky, 1990:31).

Collete Guillaumin suggests that expressions of masculine domination, from the mundane practices of sexualized interaction and harassment to the linguistic positioning of woman as the marked term (woman doctor, female athlete), to the direct physical appropriation of women's time, labour and sexual obligation, are underpinned

by women's positioning as 'natural objects'[53] in relation to male 'social subjects'. The material implications of this go well beyond the domestic and 'private' to women's ability to act as subjects in the public domain.

> A…. contradiction takes place between the appropriation of women, whether it be collective or private, and their reappropriation by themselves, their objective existence as social subjects—in other words, the possibility of their selling, on their own authority, their labour power on the classical open market" (Guillaumin, 2005: 83)

Guillaumin is referring here to the ideology of the male breadwinner/female homemaker, (Pateman, 1988) which is generally seen as having been progressively eroded by the demands of neo-liberal capitalism, women's increased labour market participation and equalities legislation (Chong, 2005). However, others have suggested that in spite of these changes, the legacy of this model continues to inform the domestic division of labour and the vertical and horizontal segregation of the labour market (Cambell et al, 2009), and so to undermine women's ability to constitute themselves as workers in the same way as men (Pateman, 1988). As discussed in chapter two, the deeply gendered and embodied nature of labour is also underscored by work on the heterosexualization, aestheticization and emotionalization of women's paid work where the display of femininity is required as 'part of the job' but is also constituted as a natural expression of femaleness rather than a source of capital. In this context, women's labour often continues to be appropriated rather than exchanged (Adkins & Lury 1999) because their embodied capital is unrecognized as capital and only "recognized as legitimate (inherited) competence" (Bourdieu, 1983 cited in McCall, 1992; 843). In the light of this, Bourdieu's reference to the expansion of female occupations based on 'charm and beauty' and the way in which this may have brought about "a legitimate market in physical properties....[and] a whole set of changes in ethics and a redefinition of the legitimate image of femininity" (Bourdieu, 2010: 149) can be interpreted as implying that

[53] Discourses which place women and racially dominated groups in relation to 'nature' and so as 'things' to be used by others, whilst (white) men are positioned in relation culture and so constituted as subjects who can own and appropriate others as 'natural objects' (Guillaumin, 2005).

the growth in women's opportunities to become capital accumulating subjects is simultaneously a retrenchment of their universalized and naturalized position as objects of exchange . Beauty therapy is a case in point and Bourdieu's analysis points to the tensions, discussed in chapter two, between beauty therapists' position as aesthetic service workers and their self-positioning as 'professionals'.

Lovell (2000) suggests that in defining women principally as objects, Bourdieu disregards how, in actively engaging in hierarchies of class and race, women are separated "from each other in social space" (Ibid:21). The way in which these divisions undercut feminist ideals of solidarity between women is underscored by McRobbie's (2004) proposition that social/economic divisions, once understood in terms of masculine hierarchies, are being reinvented in "more autonomously feminized ways" (Ibid: 101) with women being incited to produce their bodies as expressions of individualized subjecthood marking new forms of classed and racialized distinctions.

> Female individualization is....a social process bringing into being new social divisions through the denigration of poor and disadvantaged women...What emerges is a new regime of more sharply polarized class positions, shabby failure or well-groomed success (Ibid: 101).

On this view, the capital accumulating strategies that women are incited to employ are bound up with the value placed on their bodies. Whilst these hierarchies of feminine corporeal capital may produce new forms of classed antagonisms between women positioned as autonomous subjects in the 'new economy', they are built on already deeply embedded heteronormative assumptions in which women are positioned as objects of an external or internalized male gaze (Bartky, 1990; Holland et al, 1997) and incited to compete with and value each other on these terms (Ringrose, 2008; Currie et al, 2007). The way in which women are then obliged to navigate between the positions of social subject and sexual object (Currie, et al, 2007) has parallels with Gill's (2009; 2008) argument, discussed in chapter three, that the shift from commercialized representations of women as sexual objects to sexual subjects who "understand their

own objectification as pleasurable and self-chosen" (Gill, 2009: 107) represents a new disciplinary regime and "a more 'advanced' or pernicious form of exploitation" (Ibid:107). Lovell (2000) argues that "[t]he idea of 'producing oneself as an object' is paradoxical within a language which links identity with subjectivity and therefore with positioning as a subject" (Ibid: 21). However, McRobbie and Gill's work suggests the possibility that under neo-liberal regimes of femininity women are being increasingly incited to produce themselves simultaneously as objects and subjects, or possibly as 'objectified subjects'. Whilst it is clearly the case that the incitement to take up a position and actually embracing it as identity are different things, we need, as Gill (2008) argues, to investigate empirically how women experience these discourses. Recent studies suggest that objectifying and sexualizing practices from cosmetic surgery to forms of 'sex work' are increasingly regarded as legitimate and 'empowering' practices by young women (Walter, 2010; Banyard, 2010). At the same time, however, these practices are being questioned by others in the context of a 'new wave' of feminist activism since the mid-2000s (Aune & Redfern, 2008). Clearly women do not "universally and exclusively position themselves as objects" (Lovell, 2000:21), in part because it is not "possible to do so unequivocally" (Ibid:21). However, this leaves open the question of how the imposition of objectification, regardless of whether it is embraced or resisted, affects women's ability to act as social and capital accumulating subjects (Lovell, 2000) and how this is related to other dimensions of inequality.

Conclusion

Materialist feminist critiques of the theories discussed in this chapter have opened out a range of possibilities for thinking about the relationship between subjectivity, agency and structural power relations. In chapters seven, eight, nine and ten I draw on these insights to examine the ways in which beauty therapy courses, and beauty therapy students and their tutors, are caught up in disciplinary regimes and the extent to which these are shaped by the practices and discourses of neo-liberal individualism. In addition, I investigate the extent to which the notion of the reflexivity and its pre-eminence in contemporary discourses of self-making shape students' accounts of their

decisions and trajectories, and their relationship to beauty practices and beauty therapy training. However, because of its explanatory power in relation to the reproduction of gendered and classed domination, I draw to a much greater extent on Bourdieu's theories of habitus, capitals and fields, and feminist readings of these. Nevertheless, whilst some feminists locate the strength of Bourdieu's work in its emphasis on the difficulty of social change, others have pointed to its apparent closure on questions of resistance and conscious action as its major weakness. As Mottier argues, even though his project aims to undermine the agency/structure dualism, there is "too much structure and not enough agency in Bourdieu's theory of practice" (Motiier, 2002:354). As this chapter suggests, within Bourdieu's terms "the scope of human freedom is not large" (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992, cited in Lovell, 2000:18). However, it cannot be entirely absent. Some of the empirical research discussed here suggests that though women act within conditions of constraint they are often engaged in more conscious types of 'negotiation' with power than Bourdieu's theories allow room for. In addition, the way in which women can 'take on' a 'masculine' habitus in certain contexts clearly indicates that women do not inevitably or straightforwardly acquire femininity in the way Bourdieu suggests. The ambivalences in women's experience raise a number of questions. Do young women, like the ones in this study, simply 'follow the leanings of habitus' in making educational or other life decisions? Even if the dialectic between habitus and objective structures plays a large part in the construction of 'choices', do people necessarily make a 'virtue of necessity' or, as Skeggs suggests, do the dominated also respond to their situations with anger, frustration and forms of (often misrecognized) resistance? The ambivalence in women's experiences also raises questions about female objectification. Whilst women may be positioned as objects of exchange, this does not mean that they always position themselves as such. In spite of the reproductive emphasis of his work, Bourdieu acknowledges that people do resist dominant power relations (Lovell, 2000). What we need to do, however, is "to examine under what conditions these [resistant] dispositions are socially constituted, effectively triggered, and rendered politically efficient" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, cited in ibid, 2000). If the beauty industry plays a key role in reproducing objectified femininity, what room is there on beauty therapy courses for students to challenge this and how does

this social and symbolic positioning, regardless of whether or not it is 'taken as identity', shape the ways in which they are able to constitute themselves as social subjects?

The next chapter addresses the issues of resistance and consciousness via an exploration of Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, its role as a key mechanism of social reproduction and its relationship to other forms of violence.

Chapter Five

Networks of violence in social life: Symbolic, structural and direct violence and the possibility of resistance

In this chapter, I take as my starting point the idea that when social injustices lead to suffering they are transformed into expressions of violence (Menjivar, 2008). I begin my discussion with Bourdieu's critique of domination which allows us to consider practices which are commonly understood through the rhetoric of individual choice, inclination or ability as produced by and producing covert, symbolic forms of violence. Drawing on a range of feminist and non-feminist work, I explore how symbolic violence may provide the conditions in which other forms of violence (physical violence and the violence of unjust and unequal socio-economic structures) can flourish and, conversely, how these forms of violence reinforce the operation of symbolic violence in sustaining relations of domination. In exploring these issues, I focus on how gendered and classed symbolic violence works in general terms and across the seemingly disparate contexts of intimate partner violence, the sex industry, beauty practices and education. I also consider how, paradoxically, symbolic violence might point to possibilities for resistance and social change in particular circumstances.

Bourdieu conceptualizes the wielding of symbolic power by groups or institutions as a form of violence that pervades social life, is embedded in everyday action, but which goes largely unnoticed or is misrecognized, both by those who impose it by virtue of their symbolic capital, and by its victims. Wacquant argues that the entirety of Bourdieu's work;

> Can be read as a quest to explicate the specificity and potency of symbolic power, that is, the capacity that systems of meaning and signification have of shielding, and thereby strengthening, relations of oppression and exploitation by

> hiding them under a cloak of nature, benevolence, meritocracy....his sociology of 'culture'...reveals itself for what it is in truth: a political economy of symbolic violence (Wacquant, 1993:1).

At its heart, the concept of symbolic violence is an attempt to account for how social practices which lead to conformity with dominant norms are imposed on groups and individuals at micro levels through mundane, every day practices which produce and reproduce forms of macro-level domination (Colagouri, 2010). Bourdieu shows, for example, how cultural classifications of neo-liberal social life based on bodily presentation, forms of objectified cultural capital (what one owns and consumes), or 'lifestyle choices', reinforce new forms of class inequality by hiding the power dynamics which produce them behind notions of individual inclination or 'taste'. However, in Bourdieu's terms this is not simply a matter of ideological obfuscation or manipulation, but rather of subjectification. The power of symbolic violence "lies in the fact that it is embedded in the forms of subjectivity that serve to maintain the social order" (Ibid: 395):

> Symbolic force is a form of power that is exerted on bodies, directly and as if by magic, without any physical constraint; but this magic works only on the basis of dispositions deposited, like springs, at the deepest level of the body (Bourdieu, 2001: 38).

Subjectification also reveals the *violence* of symbolic violence in the way that it inculcates complicity or 'voluntary submission' to relations of domination and thus incites the dominated to act, often unwittingly, in ways that reproduce those relations and, in that sense, against their own interests. In relation to social class, Bourdieu argues that indicators of taste, and thus the social structures which give rise to them, become embodied as dispositions of the habitus, functioning " as a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place'" (Bourdieu, 2010: 469).

It is through the workings of symbolic violence that 'objective limits' (those imposed by one's social situation in relation to economic, social and cultural capital) become a

subjective 'sense of limits' which ultimately lead the dominated to accept their constrained access to resources and power as normal or natural. For Bourdieu, the objective divisions of the social world are internalized as perceptual schemas based on a network of oppositions, expressed as "antagonistic adjectives commonly used to classify and qualify persons or objects in the most varied areas of practice" (Bourdieu, 2010:470). In relation to social class the ultimate source of these dualisms is "the opposition between the 'elite' of the dominant and the 'mass' of the dominated, a contingent, disorganized multiplicity, interchangeable and innumerable, existing only statistically" (Ibid: 471)[54]. The violence of these 'moral binaries' (Bourgois, 2002) is contained both in the humanity denying stereotypes on which they feed and in their internalization which persuades the dominated "that their actions are the cause of their own predicament and that their subordination is the logical outcome of the natural order of things" (Ibid: 223). Through internalization, symbolic violence can also spawn a sense of shame, or recriminations and hostility between members of dominated groups (Bourgois, 2001:3).

Such 'practical taxonomies' are also significant in terms of Bourdieu's understanding of the somatization of the social relations of sexual domination (Bourdieu, 2001). He argues that the arbitrary opposition between male and female "receives its objective and subjective necessity from its insertion into a system of homologous oppositions": public/private, culture/nature, mind/body, brains/beauty, strength/weakness, rationality/ emotion, and so on. Thus through "the inexhaustible play of practical transfers and metaphors" (Ibid:11) sexual difference is mapped onto and embedded in other socially constructed binaries which in turn reinforce the 'naturalness' and inevitability of sex through " a relationship of circular causality which confines thought within the self-evidence of relations of domination" (Ibid, 2001: 11) . It is the perceived biological basis of sexual difference which makes gender, in Bourdieu's terms, a paradigmatic case of symbolic violence in producing sexed bodies and dispositions which look and are

[54] For instance, such oppositions are ubiquitous in current media representations of the 'deserving' versus the 'undeserving' poor, the latter constructed, especially in the tabloid media, through images of 'illegal immigrants' as "undifferentiated hordes" (Bourdieu, 2010:471), or the unemployed as 'feckless benefit cheats'.

experienced as natural rather than products of history. In this sense, sex/gender is also a limiting case of the amnesia of social origins. Moreover, If we embody social power relations it makes little sense to talk about our 'choices' in relation to bodily presentation (or anything else) as if they are outside or in opposition to external social forces. Understanding sexual difference involves moving beyond the categories of "constraint (by forces) and consent (to reasons), between mechanical coercion and voluntary, free, deliberate, even calculated submission" (Bourdieu, 2001:37).

This understanding of sexual difference shares with French radical materialist feminism an emphasis on the hidden social production and naturalization of the categories of sex as the underpinning of the "economic, political, ideological order" of male supremacy (Wittig, 2005:20). The question is how ideology operates at a micro-level to produce conformity to the norms of sexual difference. Contrary to some readings of materialist feminism (for instance Davis, 2002), Wittig's analysis does not simply represent ideology as 'bearing down' on individuals. Her concept of 'the straight mind' (Wittig, 1988), constituted through a language which signifies persons in terms of sex/gender could be seen as analogous to the schemas and dispositions of habitus and, as indicated earlier, it is at a bodily as well as cognitive level that Wittig sees the ideology of sexual difference working to create subjects who actively acquiesce to their domination. At the same time, however, Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence makes revealing and resisting domination appear to be a near impossibility:

> Because their dispositions are the product of embodiment…women cannot but constantly confirm this prejudice…It follows that their acts of cognition are acts of practical recognition, doxic acceptance….which in a sense 'makes the symbolic violence which it undergoes (Bourdieu, 2001:32-34).

In contrast, Wittig's analysis rests on the idea of a much more critical and reflexive subject. Whilst accepting that the 'heterosexual unconscious' acts as a mechanism of domination, she rejects the idea that sexed subjectivity is so deeply and unconsciously embedded in bodies as to be practically beyond any kind of conscious apprehension,

much less refusal (Wittig, 1988a). Rather, the "violent reality of the oppositions [of sex]" is maintained through censorship- the drowning out of oppositional discourses:

> These discourses of heterosexuality oppress us in the sense that they prevent us from speaking unless we speak in their terms. Everything which puts them into question is at once disregarded (Wittig, 1988a:433).

Unlike, Bourdieu, Wittig leaves open the possibility that subjects can uncover the contradictions sustaining domination. This allows her to conceive of a subject capable of standing 'outside the categories of sex' through oppositional practices and analyses[55]. Indeed, for Wittig, becoming a subject rather than object of oppression is premised upon the development of a critical consciousness of the nature of oppression (Wittig, 2005). Other feminists have also contested the idea that gender is only produced and maintained at an unconscious level. Whilst Bourdieu argues that the operation of gendered symbolic violence dispenses with need for overt forms of justification (Bourdieu, 2001), Skeggs points to the way in which femininity is constantly and everywhere reinforced as an indication that "it cannot be purely… pre-reflexive or unconscious" (Skeggs, 2004:25).

This, however, does not mean that that the concept of symbolic violence is not a useful and productive one for feminism or that it cannot be used without accepting Bourdieu's "at times bleakly pessimistic" (Lovell, 2000:27) model. For instance, Chambers (2005) points to Catherine MacKinnon's understandings of feminist consciousness raising[56]which allows us to think about symbolic violence as both a mechanism of domination and, paradoxically, as a necessary precondition of social change:

> Whereas Bourdieu's account of symbolic violence casts doubt on the possibility of female emancipation…..MacKinnon's account asserts that is

[55] In Wittig's terms, lesbianism is the practice and materialist feminism the analysis which makes it possible to take up a standpoint 'stand outside' the categories of sex (Wittig, 1988b).

[56] MacKinnon understands feminist consciousness raising in standpoint terms as the enquiry by women into the minutiae of lived experience and practice. In her terms, it is the method by which women can reveal the duality of male power as both 'delusional and real' (Mackinnon, 1997).

> precisely because women's consciousnesses are formed by patriarchal social structures that women have access to and can understand the nature of patriarchy (Ibid, 2005:335)

Since habitus embeds social structure into the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals it can be seen as a site of possibility for understanding those structures by "looking inwards" at our 'selves' (Ibid: 335). This is both what MacKinnon means by consciousness raising and, in spite of his dismissal of CR as a mistaken understanding of consciousness -as "dispositions attuned to the structure of domination" misunderstood as "mystified consciousness" (Bourdieu, 2001:43)- it is also what Bourdieu means by 'reflexivity'. Both involve an analysis of the workings of symbolic violence through "the systematic exploration of the "unthought categories of thought which delimit the unthinkable and predetermine the thought" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, cited in Chambers, 2005:336). However, both concepts appear to tacitly assume that a break with doxa can only occur in certain rarified circumstances- reflexivity in the practices of academics, and conscious raising in CR groups or within feminist activism. This raises the question of whether and how those outside these fields can become subjects rather than objects of oppression (Wittig, 1988b). Are young working class women, like those in this study, "'condemned to participate in the symbolic violence of gender" (Chambers, 2005:333) and class? One possible answer is provided by Bourdieu's understanding of the relationship between habitus and field.

Symbolic violence "works when subjective structures-the habitus-and objective structures are in accord with each other" (Kraiss, 1993:172). If habitus is constructed or reinforced by a field so that it is in harmony with its structures and norms, it follows that a normative change within a field or a move into a different field in which "an individual encounters circumstances that are incompatible with her habitus" (Chambers, 2005:340) might bring about a change in habitus. This idea has been used by feminists to think about the conditions under which a change in consciousness might come about. McNay suggests that the "effects of the gendered habitus may be attenuated by the movement of individuals across fields" ((McNay, 2000: 53) and points particularly to the

entry of women into male dominated areas of employment though, as Chambers argues, a number of factors may undercut such effects, including the durability of habitus and the constancy of the symbolic principles of masculine domination even in the face of significant changes in gender relations. For instance, Dryburgh's (1999, cited in Chambers, 2005) study of women in engineering suggests that women's response to entering male dominated occupations may well involve alterations in habitus but often in ways that remain acquiescent to the gender norms of the field. As Bourdieu argues " [c]risis is a necessary condition for the questioning of doxa but it is not in itself a sufficient condition for the production of a critical discourse" (Bourdieu, 1977:169). However, a minority of Dryburgh's respondents were critical of the gender normative behavior of male colleagues and its effects on women. Whilst this may have been partly due to dispositions they brought to the field, it may also suggest that being an 'outsider within' can intensify the "experience of exclusion from male privilege [which] accords women a certain critical insight" (McNay, 2000:53):

> ..this dissonance may lead to a greater awareness – what Bourdieu calls the 'lucidity of the excluded' ….The questioning of conventional notions of femininity does not arise just from exposure to and identification with a greater array of alternative images of femininity, but from tensions inherent in the concrete negotiation of increasingly conflictual female roles" (McNay 2000: 69).

McCall (1992) suggests that it is precisely because women are "continually entering and struggling in environments that are "not for the likes of them"" that they are always aware, on some level, of exclusionary practices and of the falsity of oppositions which do not capture the ambiguities of their experiences. This suggests that women's consciousness may often be predicated not just on the unconscious workings of habitus, but on "a self-consciousness [which] is acquired…from taking a gendered disposition into a position that does not fit it" (McCall, 1992: 849). However, she suggests that because gender operates across all fields so that "the entire social space [can be considered as] a single field of male domination" (Ibid: 846) all sites are

potential producers of a critical gender consciousness capable of curtailing the operation of symbolic violence. What implications does this argument have for the development of women's consciousness in sites like beauty therapy which are predominantly female spaces and in which women are ostensibly engaged in pleasurable feminine practices in the absence of a direct male gaze? It seems likely that this situation would obscure rather than accentuate the contradictions of gendered power relations and that the logic of habitus would reinforce the fit between the norms of the field and the gendered dispositions of women within it. However, even if this is the case, contradictions may arise in relation to other dimensions of inequality. As discussed in chapter three, the expectations of bodily femininity are fragmented by class and race (Craig 2006; Black, 2004; Skeggs, 1997). This means that whilst women in beauty salons (as clients, workers or students) may generally subscribe to the importance of a feminine appearance, classed and racialized conflicts over what this entails may result in a sense of dissonance where, for instance, a middle class client's notions of an 'appropriate look' are at odds with those of her beauty therapist (Gimlin, 2002). Craig argues that far from implying a resistance to dominant norms, as Gimlin suggests, rejecting certain practices or types of appearance is more likely to signal an active submission "to racialized class norms, defined in opposition to the marginalized femininities of poorer women and women of colour" (Craig, 2005: 166). This raises the question of what happens when working class or Black women are subject to white, middle class appearance norms. McRobbie (2004) argues that where this dynamic is played out in television makeover shows, working class or lower middle class women become victims of symbolic violence enacted through the 'guidance' of middle class 'experts' on the basis of a "habitus already inclined to submit to social authority" (Ibid, 2004: 104). Even where marginalized women experience a profound sense of dissonance in performing femininity defined in white, middle class terms, their investments in producing their own versions of 'bodily respectability' (Skeggs, 1997) are 'too embedded within structures of inequality to be characterized as acts of resistance or liberation" (Craig, 2006: 166).

These arguments would tend to suggest that whilst dissonance and ambivalence may characterize women's engagements in beauty practices, the operation of symbolic violence in the context of beauty therapy is unlikely to come up against any challenge significant enough to engender a critical consciousness of the role that beauty plays in sustaining gendered and classed power relations. [57]

Networks of violence

Beauty practices provide an example of how symbolic violence works at a micro-level to secure acquiescence which is both voluntary and coerced. However, as Colaguori (2010) argues, symbolic violence also plays a role in institutional structures from agencies of the state to religious and educational organizations "in securing the consent of subjects in accord with the dictates of operational practices" (Ibid:389). The scope of symbolic violence, operating horizontally across fields and vertically from micro to macro - levels underscores its significance as part of the way in which "social regulation is achieved through consistently coercive means" (ibid: 389). If violence "is everywhere in social practice" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgios, 2004:21) this implies that symbolic violence cannot be understood in isolation from other expressions of violence: that it may play a key role in normalizing and legitimizing other forms of violence from 'everyday' interpersonal violence (Scheper-Hughes, 1996) to economic and structural violence (Bourgois, 2001; 2002; Galtung, 1975), and, conversely, that these forms of violence may spawn symbolic violence. Understood in this way, the concept of symbolic violence can help to address what Jackman calls "the gaping holes and inconsistencies" in sociological understandings of violence" (Jackman, 2001:388).

Colaguori argues that whilst there appears to be "a general consensus that the "problem of violence is becoming more pronounced….in both local and global contexts"

[57] This does not mean that women who use beauty salons are necessarily uncritical of beauty norms, just that beauty therapy and beauty practices are unlikely to give rise to a critical consciousness unless they are subjected to a feminist analysis. For example, women's experience of beauty has been used to develop a critical awareness of gender inequality, See Chapkis, (1986).

(Colaguori, 2010:388), this has not lead to a radical questioning of how violence is normatively understood. He suggests that this may be due to the difficulties involved in making sense of the complexities of violence and the multiple forms it takes from sexual and domestic violence to murder, to organized and state sanctioned war or genocide, to the kinds of practices which are commonly understood through the psychologizing language of aggression. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) argue, violence "is a slippery concept" (Ibid:1) which refuses any easy categorization and extends well beyond commonsense notions of the interpersonal use of force in the direct infliction of suffering. It is:

> …non-linear, productive, destructive, and reproductive"… [it] can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality-force, assault, or the infliction of pain-alone. Violence also includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of self worth or value of the victim (Ibid: 1).

This perspective, however, has not been generally reflected in mainstream scholarly understandings. Jackman (2002), suggests that within sociology, disparate and specialized bodies of research have been informed by social and policy demands which have generally assumed an unproblematized consensus about the meaning of violence. In her view, the two key assumptions underlying this research are that violence involves the "willful intent to cause harm" (ibid:388) and that it involves behavior which deviates from 'mainstream', everyday interaction in legal, social and moral terms. Whilst some researchers have incorporated varying criteria according to the "demands of their subject matter" (ibid:388), understandings of violence have often been shaped by a number of issues which resonate with legalistic or commonsense definitions of violence. Firstly, studies have tended to focus on actions resulting in physical harm. Though some research points to psychological injuries, this is often mediated by the idea that they count only if they are "so severe as to warrant being called violence" (Holmes, 1990, cited in Ibid:391), or where they are understood as being a prelude to physical injuries. Secondly, definitions of violence are typically limited to physical behaviours, although verbal and written actions have sometimes been included. Thirdly,

mainstream definitions of violence have led to ambiguity in relation to the issue of victim complicity[58]. Definitions of violence rarely stretch to include circumstances in which, for instance, individuals voluntarily undergo cosmetic surgery or in which women's involvement in the sex industry is understood as 'freely chosen' rather than 'coerced' (Jeffreys, 1997). Lastly, scholars have tended to emphasize interpersonal violence where there are "identifiable agents and victims and immediate and certain outcomes" (Jackman, 2002:388). In contrast:

> …injurious actions with fragmented or corporate agency, amorphous or anonymous victims, and delayed or probabilistic injuries are included intermittently in research on violence (Ibid: 388)

Consequently, the material, social and psychological injuries inflicted on social groups or communities through non-direct means, for instance through unequal distribution of resources/capitals, and through symbolic domination, are excluded from dominant definitions of violence. The doxic status of these definitions may partly explain why Bourdieusian scholars have tended to treat symbolic violence as a concept which describes how domination works, rather than theorizing it as a 'real' form of violence in itself. However, more recently there have been a number of attempts to place it more centrally in theoretical and empirical investigations of how violence in general operates to reproduce domination.

In an effort to explicate the embeddedness of violence in social life, Phillipe Bourgois (2001) differentiates between four strands of interacting and mutually supporting violence: the 'direct political violence' imposed by official regimes (and sometimes by those opposing them) through physical means and through psychological terror, the 'structural violence'[59]of economic oppression and local and global systematic

[58] For instance, Jackman (2002) suggests that although domestic and sexual abuse is now usually accepted within the rubric of violence, there is still diffidence in non-feminist contexts about individual cases where women stay in abusive relationships or 'fail' to report sexual harassment.

[59] The concept of structural violence was brought into academic debate by Johan Galtung to name the multifaceted injuries caused by historically embedded political-economic oppression and social inequality (Galtung, 1969).

inequalities (gender, class, race), and the symbolic violence of "internalized humiliations and legitimizations of inequality and hierarchy ranging from sexism and racism to intimate expressions of class power" (Ibid:426), and the 'everyday violence' taking place on a;

> ….micro-interactional level: interpersonal, domestic and delinquent…. individual lived experience that normalizes petty brutalities and terror at the community level and creates a common sense ethos of violence (Ibid: 426).

In an analysis of his ethnographic work with revolutionary peasants in early 1980s El Salvador, and with poor communities in late 1980s East Harlem, New York, Bourgois shows how social, economic and physical suffering occasioned by brutal state repression and military violence in the former case, and by the social segregation and poverty produced by neo-liberal capitalism in the latter, gives rise to 'everyday' forms of interpersonal and symbolic violence in subjugated communities including types of violence which involve the 'complicity' which is excluded from dominant definitions:

> [e]xtreme segregation, social inequality, and material misery express themselves at ground level in interpersonal conflicts that the socially vulnerable inflict mainly onto themselves…onto their kin and friends (through domestic violence and adolescent gang rape) and onto their neighbors and community …More subtly, it …allows symbolic violence to prevail: blaming the poor-and getting the poor to blame themselves for their poverty (Ibid:427).

Bourgois (2002) suggests that structural violence has a central and originary status in the workings of violence. On this view, symbolic violence as the internalization of entrenched structural violence results in 'everyday' expressions of direct violence. In the above statement the structural is seen primarily in narrow economic terms with the result that the male violence of rape is assumed to proceed from class injustice rather than the structural relations of gender and heterosexuality. However, his arguments are useful in that they emphasize the way in which structural violence "is experienced by its

victims through its various interfaces with other forms of violence-symbolic, everyday and political" (Bourgois, 2002:222). In mediating social experience, symbolic violence shapes individuals' understandings of social processes, legitimizing or obscuring dominant power relations and the forms of violence which they rely on and produce.

Maddy Coy's (2011) recent work on the relationship between symbolic violence and prostitution demonstrates how this might work. She argues that the 'dynamics of prostitution'- the structural relations of the sex industry in which women become sexual objects of exchange in a global marketplace, and the (hetero)gendered ideologies which sustain this trade– are increasingly promoted and normalized through contemporary globalized popular culture as a paradigm for normative (hetero)gender relations and identities. Symbolic violence through style trends such as 'pimp and ho chic' glamorize prostitution and effectively obscure and trivialize "the harms women experience in the sex industry: violence, coercion and exploitation as well as dehumanization of the body as commodity". Secondly, the way in which the globalized media tacitly or explicitly promote assumptions of 'male sex right' and the inevitability of prostitution[60] dehistoricizes and naturalizes the sex industry. Thirdly, the mainstreaming of the language of prostitution, including the terms 'ho', 'whore', 'slut', imposes object status on all women as well as inciting them to embrace 'hypersexualized' styles and identities. As discussed in chapter three, the targeted marketing of sex to women, and indeed to young girls (Jeffreys, 2005), through the fashion and beauty industries may be key to understanding how sexualized femininity "within conventional patriarchal frames of reference" (Attwood, 2005:401) is promoted as source of identity for women. Moreover, some research suggests that these practices may be implicated in women's involvement in the sex industry. For instance, in her research on 'exotic dancers', Wesley suggests that through the processes of sexualization from childhood onwards "women are forced to see themselves as objects" (Wesley, 2002: 1183), a sense which, she argues, contributed (along with material deprivation) to her respondents' 'choice' of exotic dancing and which was reinforced in their interactions with male 'customers'. In this sense, Coy suggests, symbolic violence

[60] For example in the ubiquitous notion of prostitution as the 'oldest profession' (see Jeffreys, 1997)

both produces women's "complicity and engagement in these dynamics" (Ibid: 442) and works as a "conceptual justification for [direct, sexual] violence" (ibid:443). In addition, belying the individualized rhetoric of choice and empowerment, the language of prostitution continues to function in relation to discourses of sexual reputation. Whilst women across class divides may be required to negotiate the sexual divide between 'good' and 'bad' femininities, it is poor, working class women and those in the sex industry for whom the stigma of prostitution has a particularly "acute meaning" (Ibid:443; see also Ringrose, 2008; Skeggs, 1997;2005). Not only does the symbolic violence contained in the denigration of women in prostitution reproduce classed divisions between women, it has also served as a justification for extreme violence and murder (Salfati &Ferguson, 2008, cited in Coy, 2011:443).

Coy's demonstration of the interconnections between forms of violence operating at "physical, sexual, material and psychosocial [symbolic]" levels (Coy, 2011:443) highlights the way in which "[o]ne type of injury spills out into another" (Jackman, 2002 :394) so that it becomes impossible to "neatly separate" categories of violence (Bourgois, 2002:223). Because of this, Bourgois suggests that violence should be understood as a continuum in order to "prevent an either/ or understanding of the social processes whereby one form of violence neatly covers for or replaces another" (Bourgois, 2002: 223). This idea, however, has unacknowledged precursors in feminist theory. For instance, Liz Kelly's (1988) concept of a 'continuum of sexual violence' broadened out normative definitions to show how 'typical' (everyday types of sexual harassment, pressurized sex) and 'aberrant' (assault, rape, incest) "shade into one another" (Kelly, 1988:75). However, Kelly does not include objectifying practices which women engage in 'voluntarily'. In part, this is because the continuum is based on interviewees experiences of direct violation and intimidation, and in part because her definition of violence is rooted firmly in interpersonal behaviours so that "[t]he basic common character underlying the many different types of violence is the abuse, intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force men use to control women" (Ibid: 76). Although this continuum stretches the definition of violence to emphasize its embeddedness in everyday gendered interaction, it is not stretched far enough to

include the mundane symbolic practices which normalize male dominance and which are productive of women's subjectivity and 'choices' as well as being a destructive force in their lives. However, I would argue that if such expressions of symbolic violence were understood as part of the continuum of sexual violence then practices connected to bodily femininity and appearance could be legitimately included on it.

Kelly insists that the notion of a continuum should not "be interpreted as a statement about the relative seriousness of different forms of sexual violence" (Ibid:76). Nevertheless, it does carry implications of a 'more or less' relationship between behaviours plotted along it. Kelly herself makes use of this aspect in terms of greater or lesser degrees of 'prevalence' of particular forms of violence, but other feminists have employed the concept to rank behaviours from the least to most physically violent (Quina, 1997, Jeffrey, 2005). On this model, symbolic violence would be positioned as less serious or 'real' than other forms (Colagouri, 2010). As Bourdieu argues, "[u]nderstanding 'symbolic' as the opposite of 'real', 'actual', people suppose that symbolic violence is a purely 'spiritual' violence with no real effects" (Bourdieu, 2001:34). But as Lovell points out, "if Bourdieu establishes anything it is the deep power of symbolic violence to inflict harm, pain, injury" (Lovell, 2004:50-51).

The real/less real dichotomy is challenged by Morgan and Bjorkert's (2010) research on women's experience of male violence in which they analyze the ways in which symbolic violence, working through psychological abuse and institutional narratives which position women as responsible for their own safety, and discourses of romantic love and feminine self-sacrifice, has effects on women's lives which are often perceived by them as ultimately more devastating than direct physical abuse. Whilst Morgan & Bjorkert do not underestimate the huge impact of physical violence, they make an extremely important point about the danger of underestimating the significance of symbolic violence as an "elementary mode of domination" (Krais, 1993:172). Citing Bourdieu's argument that the more direct domination is disapproved of, the more disguised forms will mobilized in order to exercise domination (Bourdieu, 1991, cited in Morgan & Bjorkert: 445), they point out the paradoxical possibility that "the more feminists fight

against direct violence, the more it is subverted and takes the form of symbolic violence" (Morgan & Bjorkert, 2006:396). This implies that we should be paying attention not only to forms of symbolic violence that directly "accompany or precede physical violence" (Ibid: 441) but also to forms that are currently much easier to confuse with freedom, choice and autonomous pleasure. Beauty practices are a key example of this because the effectiveness of their role in the production of naturalized (hetero)sexual difference and domination relies on their being seen as freely chosen and felt as pleasurable or at least as a necessary expression of identity.

Violence and beauty practices

As discussed in chapter three, some feminists have noted the way in which beauty practices are predicated on and cause social and personal suffering for women. However, in most of these accounts the social forces which produce this suffering have generally not been explicitly theorized in terms of violence. When the idea of violence is directly invoked it is often in relation to the physical harms done by particular 'extreme' forms of beauty practice. The notion of symbolic violence, however, might contribute to our understanding of western beauty practices as forms of 'harmful cultural/traditional practice' (Jeffreys, 2002; 2005). Whilst Jeffreys is uncompromising in her view that women are incited to 'choose' and enjoy beauty practices because of symbolic manipulation operating through channels such as advertising and women's magazines creating " the guise of free-will and choice' (Callghan, 1994, cited in Jeffreys, 2005: 27), there are inconsistencies in her argument which, paradoxically, lead her to underestimate the power of violence operating at a symbolic level to inflict harms potentially as serious as those inflicted through physical means. Though she acknowledges that pleasure in beauty practices is "not inconsistent with their role in the subordination of women" she does not analyze the mechanisms through which it might be constructed at a deep, subjective level and thus underplays the way in which the process of construction might constitute a form of violence in itself. This leads her to conceptualize violence as imposed on bodies rather than working through bodies, as

suggested in her argument that beauty practices operate on a continuum defined in terms of the severity of physical harm "from lipstick at one end to invasive cosmetic surgery at the other" (Ibid:28). Whilst she argues that everyday beauty practices reproduce sexual difference and gender stereotypes which affect women as a group she positions them as less harmful than practices which physically injure the bodies of individual women. In this sense, Jeffreys' analysis does not quite shake off the assumptions embedded in normative individualistic and interpersonal definitions of violence. Without a concept of how symbolic power works at an embodied level to produce 'choice', pleasure and subjectivity it is difficult to argue convincingly that beauty practices at the 'least physically harmful end of the continuum', constitute violence in themselves. I would argue that in (understandably) refusing postmodern and Foucauldian conceptions of power and agency she sidesteps an analysis of the subject as at least partly an effect of power and so in spite of her acknowledgement of pleasure as compatible with domination, her analysis remains hampered by the pleasure/domination distinction: by the idea that beauty practices are either a choice or an imposition.

Other perspectives, however, may help to broaden out the idea of beauty as a harmful traditional practice by including its embodied and subjectivized dimensions. Cecilia Menjivar (2008) argues that understanding how gendered violence works means paying attention to how it is experienced by women (and others) at a corporeal level. Her analysis of interviews with Ladina women in Guatemala suggests that intertwined forms of structural/economic violence (unequal access to food and health care), direct violence (domestic abuse and control of women's sexuality and fertility) and symbolic violence (the naturalized view as women as self-sacrificial carers) are manifested in various forms of distress, demoralization and poor physical health. This, she argues, illustrates "how structures of violence translate into everyday suffering and become embodied… routinized and…misrecognized" (Ibid: 15). Sarah Naomi Shaw's work on the discourses of self-harm is useful in thinking about how this model might be applied to everyday appearance practices. She argues that both normalized beauty practices and self- injury regarded as abnormal in medicalized terms, are predicated on "

women's experiences of relational and cultural violations, silencing and objectification" (Ibid: 192), and that both may be understood as "bodily idioms through which women express their psychological distress" as a response to this (Ibid: 192). This perspective points to the possibility that forms of structural, direct and symbolic violence are inscribed on women's bodies through the aesthetic practices of femininity. Moreover, the concept of symbolic violence allows us to consider how these forms of violence, which are always both gendered and classed, are not just written on the body but also incorporated in subjectivity. In this analysis, beauty practices across Jeffreys' continuum can be seen as an integral part of the networks of violence in which women's lives and identities are embedded and as one explicit manifestation of how "violence and suffering are embodied" (Menjivar, 2008:12).

Violence in education

For Bourdieu, modes of pedagogic action, including those operating in everyday social interaction, in the family and within educational institutions, are a mainstay of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Jenkins, 1992) in that the values and meanings held by those with 'pedagogic authority' are generally accepted as legitimate both by members of dominant and dominated groups. Through symbolic violence, education, particularly in formal schooling, reproduces both culture and structural power relations because it allows "dominant groups in society [to] make their own particular form of cultural capital appear to be the natural way of being in the world" (Herr & Anderson, 2003:417), whilst excluding or censoring other contrary meanings or values (Jenkins, 1992). In Bourdieu's terms, the micro-level process of the classroom and the meso-level institutional practices of the school contribute to outcomes at a macro-level through "the reproduction of the relations between groups or classes" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, cited in Herr & Anderson, 2003: 419).

A key element of Bourdieu's theory is the idea that the 'failure' of subordinate groups in dominant educational terms is built into the education system through the incongruence

between their own primary habitus-embedded cultural capital derived from informal education in the family, and the cultural capital implicitly valued in formal education. Conversely, those from dominant groups are likely to succeed in relative terms because the habitus they bring to their schooling already incorporates forms of cultural capital congruent with those implicitly valued by the school and reflected in the habitus of teachers. It is through this process that the abilities of those from dominated groups are misrecognized, leading them to become alienated from education as something that is 'not for the likes of them'. Recalling Willis' (1977) work on how education channels working class children into working class jobs, victims' responses to this symbolic violence help to produce their own subjective 'sense of limits', in effect, their acceptance of 'failure'[61] .

In Bourdieu's terms, working class students and those from other subordinated groups are likely to misrecognize their 'failure' as the outcome of personal inadequacy rather than an effect of systematic power relations. In part, this is because inequitable outcomes through academic exams and qualifications, are masked by the ideology of meritocracy which "inspire[s] universal recognition of the legitimacy of academic verdicts and of the social hierarchies they legitimate" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990:162). In this way, the education system is able to reproduce inequality without "resorting to external repression or, in particular, physical coercion" (Ibid, 1990:36). However, this does not mean that other forms of violence are not a feature of formal education. Herr and Anderson point to Bourdieu's so called 'law of the conservation of violence'[62]as a tool for "understanding the continuum – from symbolic to physical forms-of violence that

[61] As Meier puts it, "[w]hat the most successful students had going for them was that……[s]tarting on day one, certain forms of knowledge and skill- the stuff they've eagerly brought with them from home- was confirmed and honoured, thus increasing their self-confidence….But many other students never found a replacement for a school and teacher who didn't recognize their genius, who responded with a shrug or look of incomprehension as they offered their equally eager home truths. They…soon learned that in school all they could show off was their ignorance. Better to be bad, or uninterested, or just to silently withdraw (Meier, 2002, cited in Herr & Anderson, 2003:418).

[62] "You cannot cheat with the law of the conservation of violence: all violence is paid for, and for example, the structural violence exerted by the financial markets, in the form of layoffs, loss of security, etc. is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime, delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence" (Bourdieu, 1998, cited in ibid, 415)

exists in schools" (Herr & Anderson, 2003:415), and how the symbolic violence endemic in schools both reproduces structural violence and generates "local incidences of emotional and physical violence":

Acknowledging the hidden and misrecognized nature of symbolic violence, and thus the difficulties of studying it, Herr and Anderson (2003) use a 'critical incidence approach' (see chapter six) in their study of a US inner city school with a largely low income, minority ethnic intake in order to explore the operation of symbolic violence in the classroom interactions between male students and their teachers as a consequence of the lack of congruence between the habitus of teachers (a product of their classed background and /or institutional values) and the habitus of students. They show how this produces a learning environment in which teachers often misrecognize or belittle students' abilities in a way that denigrates their sense of self. Students respond to this by 'taking themselves out' of the situation by the only means at the their disposal; dozing with the heads on desks, ignoring the continual stream of disciplinary instructions from the teacher to behave 'respectfully', and looking out of the windows at a police car that has arrived to take away a pupil from another class, an incident which Herr & Anderson which Herr & Anderson see as "an all too ready metaphor for the end results of this kind of education" (Ibid:426). The authors draw attention to a 'hidden curriculum' of taken-for -granted expectations about 'proper behaviour' which tacitly reproduce hierarchies of class, race, gender and age and which result in the labeling and exclusion of students who do not or cannot conform to these requirements. Incidents of physical violence are, they suggest, an outcome of the symbolic violence which is embedded in everyday classroom interaction and which breeds low-self esteem, alienation and frustration. For students like those in Herr & Anderson's study, this may also have much longer term consequences including low-waged work and the juvenile justice system.

This does not necessarily mean that symbolic violence cannot be challenged by teachers who encourage critical thought. However, good and well meaning teachers can also be part of the problem, since:

> ….a caring attitude can function as a velvet glove that serves to obscure the exercise of symbolic violence or even collude in making the dominant habitus seem more universal and natural (Herr & Anderson, 2003: 419)

However, although they do not explicitly say so, one of the issues that Herr & Anderson's research raises is that whilst symbolic violence may produce a range of harms at a personal and social level, the forms of 'resistance' engaged in by students in the classroom suggests that symbolic violence is not always completely effective in producing consent to domination. Indeed, what it underscores is that symbolic violence can never act alone. It is, as Krais suggests, a "complimentary mode of domination" with other forms of violence (Krais, 1993:172). It's power may lie in instilling in the dominated a sense of the inevitability of their situations, even a sense of the legitimacy of hierarchy in general (and in terms of gender, a tacit acceptance of sexual difference), but this does not mean it always produces complete capitulation to all expressions of domination. This is suggested in Herr and Anderson's description of students' enthusiasm for the critical, potentially consciousness raising discussions encouraged by one teacher which implies, as McCall (1992) argues, that we need to pay attention to the conscious as well as the unconscious workings of habitus and acknowledge the way in which the consciousness of dominated groups may be formed through "a practical consideration of their lack of opportunity to join in the cultural and economic life of the dominant groups" (Ibid:849). However, in Bourdieu's terms, even the "most radical critique always has the limits that are assigned to it by the objective conditions" (Bourdieu, 2010: 169). In the case of Herr & Anderson's participants, the structural/economic violence which produces 'objective limits' on their trajectories means that their futures are likely to be narrowed to the "violent options [of] incarceration or the military" (Ibid:432) because, as Skeggs' says of women who stay with violent men, "they see no alternative" (Skeggs, 2004a: 26).

Although gender is clearly a factor in the operation of symbolic and other forms of violence in the boys-only classrooms they investigate, Herr & Anderson do not analyze

how violence "follows the fault lines of gender" (Bourgois, 2002:224) or the way in which girls may experience violence in the context of education in specific ways. Other research, however, has addressed this question, though not necessarily in Bourdieusian terms. For instance, Osler (2006) focuses on formal and informal exclusion from school as an expression of contemporary school violence which, she argues, is intimately bound up with the contradictions in education policy since 1997[63]. This, she argues, has lead to "a growth in informal, unrecorded exclusion" (Osler 2000, cited in Osler, 2006: .573). Girls are particularly vulnerable to these types of hidden exclusion for two main reasons. Firstly, the discourse of 'successful girls' and 'underachieving boys' conceals the experience of the thirty eight percent of girls in the UK who do not achieve five or more GCSEs at A* to C (DfE, 2012a). Whilst boys become 'hyper-visible' in schools and thus command most of the resources allocated to addressing 'disaffection', underachieving girls and those experiencing 'problems' are invisiblized. This discourse is part of what Osler sees as the systemic violence leading to girls' withdrawal from learning or self-exclusion from school. It is also a form of symbolic violence in its legitimization of institutionalized exclusionary practices. It obscures gendered and classed inequalities in a similar way to the discourses underlying the second reason for girls' vulnerability to self-exclusion suggested by Osler.

The greater vulnerability of boys to disciplinary exclusion rests partly on the narrow and gendered definitions of disruptive or violent behavior. Whilst boys are more likely to engage in and be victims of more visible and overt forms of physical aggression normatively understood as violence, girls are more likely to engage in and be victims of "verbal abuse and psychological violence" (Ibid,:577) . Where this is noticed at all, it is seen by teachers as less disruptive in the classroom and is also naturalized through discourses of normative femininity which, as Ringrose points out, constitute overt

[63] New Labour educational policies have on the one hand required schools to minimize disciplinary exclusion and 'truanting' and on the other have imposed an obligation to demonstrate continual improvement in test and examination results, encouraging schools to allow low achieving students to self-exclude from examinations (Osler, 2006). This resonates with Hayden's view that exclusion "occurs in a complete set of interacting circumstances of which quasi-markets in education are an important feature" (Hayden, 1997, cited in Macrae et al, 2003: 93).

aggression as a “violation of feminine codes of niceness and nurturing” (Ringrose, 2008:46) but covert aggression and sexualized regulation (‘manipulation’ and ‘meanness’) as natural, though pathologized, expressions of teenage femininity. Whilst the symbolic violence of such discourses may make forms of violence between girls largely invisible (Currie et al, 2007), or relatively benign in the perceptions of teachers, they “may represent to the victim a considerable burden” (Osler, 2006: 578). This is supported by research which suggests that the experience of being isolated from peers or being subjected to hostility or bullying can have extremely negative impacts on engagement with learning and future life chances (McGrath & Nobel, 2010). Some recent research also points to the psychosocial effects of appearance related bullying on self-consciousness and low self esteem (Mangin et al, 2008; Lovegrove & Rumsey, 2005), particularly relevant in girls regulation of each others’ performances of heterofemininity.

However, the currently dominant focus on ‘anti-social behavior’ or ‘disaffection’ in academic and policy discourses identifies the problem of violence as rooted the in individual behavior and deficits of pupils rather than in schooling itself or in wider social processes (Osler, 2006). The term ‘school violence’ is rarely used in UK policy documents. Instead the focus has been on the prevention of ‘bullying’, largely taken to refer to “repeated behavior over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally” (DfE, 2012b). However, there is still a perception that physical violence is the most serious expression of bullying in schools (Toomey et al, 2011). In addition, although recent policy highlights the way in which bullying may be “motivated by prejudice on the grounds of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation” (DfE, 2012b:3) there is no official recognition that these social inequalities may be reflected in and reproduced in schools through:

> …institutional or systemic violence, where the policies, customs and practices of the school may lead to insecurity….. amongst either staff or students [and reinforce] power relations and inequalities within institutions (Osler, 2003:577).

On this view, ‘bullying’ cannot be separated from the everyday ‘micro-violence’ experienced by both girls and boys, including poor teacher -pupil relationships in which students may feel disrespected and humiliated . It is, Osler suggests, “this climate of incivilities which enable us to understand the origins and nature of other expressions of violence in schools” (Ibid: 578). In addition, structural inequalities may be reproduced through institutionalized symbolic violence, dispensing with the need for any overt or interpersonal hostility or intentionally discriminatory behavior. For instance, some UK school-based research suggests that ‘institutional racialization’ (Rattsani, 2005 cited in Philips, 2011) operating at a micro- level through teachers’ tacit judgments about students may result in lower recorded levels of achievement for Black pupils and over-allocation to low- ability tiers (Philips, 2011). In relation to gender, the inclusion of courses such as beauty therapy in schools as an ‘enrichment’ or assessed curriculum option is, like other vocational provision, justified as a way of engaging ‘disaffected’ students (West & Steedman, 2003), but is also powerfully informed by naturalizing assumptions about the interests and abilities of working class girls. The increasingly ubiquitous ‘school prom’ also provides an example of how gendered symbolic violence is embedded in school cultures. Since the mid 2000s, this “iconic event in American culture” (Best, 2005: 195) has become a ‘tradition’ in many UK schools to mark the end of compulsory education and, more recently, ‘graduation’ from primary schools, and is sometimes supported by organizing committees of teachers, parents and students in conjunction with a highly commercialized industry which has grown up to service it (McVeigh, 2012). Limousine hire, prom fashion, salon hair and beauty treatments and pre-prom exercise regimes or ‘girls’ shape-up plans’ (proms-uk, 2012) are all promoted to young women through UK based websites which provide a marketplace for businesses to advertize to young people (Myschoolproms.co.uk). Best suggests that the prom is a key example of the role schools play in drawing “young women and men into [the] discursive relations… of heterosexual dominance and the reproduction of gender identities and inequalities” (Best, 2005: 195). In addition, the normalization of such practices through discourses of heterosexual ‘romance’ mean that its connections with other daily forms of violence including heterosexualized competition and bullying

between girls (Ringrose, 2008; Currie et al, 2007), the sexual harassment of girls and women in and outside of educational institutions (Gadin, 2012; Shute et al, 2008), and the structural and economic violence involved in women's lack of access to male dominated careers and equal pay, are rendered largely invisible.

There is very little research pointing directly to violence in the context of further education. However, the operation of symbolic, structural, and direct interpersonal forms of violence is likely to be as relevant in this context. For instance, the maintenance of the academic/vocational divide in FE colleges, discussed in chapter two, is bound up with educational filtering processes legitimized through discourses of merit, individual preference or inclination which obscure its classed nature and the symbolic and structural violence involved in shaping students' sense of limits and thus their 'choices' to follow one or other route. Equally, the gender segregated nature of vocational courses is maintained through the gendering of their cultures within and outside of colleges. For girls, the threat of sexual or sexualized harassment (Eardley & Manvell, 2006) may prevent them from entering the "scarey….non-girl territory" (Bloomer et al, 2002) of mechanics, building construction and welding courses. However even in the absence of any conscious fear of direct violence a gendered sense of limits may lead them to exclude themselves from areas in which they are anyway excluded (Bourdieu, 2010).

As discussed in chapter two, the discourses of skills, professionalism and learning styles in further education are implicated in concealing the gendered and classed disadvantages of students on vocational courses. As such, they too can be seen as forms of symbolic violence even as they are discursively bound up with promoting the interests of the most marginalized learners.

Conclusion

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is an invaluable tool for illuminating how domination and coercion can disguise themselves as nature and necessity by producing subjects/agents as effects of power. In this sense, symbolic violence is no less harmful than direct forms of violence, and arguably more insidious and damaging because of its relative invisibility. In challenging the dichotomies that pose voluntarism against determinism, it allows us to conceive of violence as embedded in seemingly disparate practices such as prostitution, beauty and education. Whilst materialist feminists have long disputed the idea that direct violence is an abnormal expression of power, the notion of symbolic violence broadens this understanding to show how interpersonal and structural violence is legitimized by the symbolic ordering of power relations as a form of violence in itself. Importantly, Bourdieu's theories point to the way in which the violence of symbolic power operates in the context of other forms of violence. Gendered, classed and racialized symbolic violence can compliment, reinforce, and reproduce direct interpersonal, institutional, and structural and economic forms of violence. Conversely, these forms of violence can "reverberate into the symbolic violence of self blame and shame" (Bourgois, 2002:233) or other expressions of internalized inequality. On this view, if symbolic violence is part of a continuum of violence, then arguably everyday beauty practices should be included on a continuum of violence against women. However, because it is difficult to extricate the notion of continuum from the idea of greater or lesser harm, it may not be the best metaphor for thinking about symbolic violence in relation to violence in general. With this in mind, the notion of 'network' may be of more use in stressing interconnections whilst avoiding the implication that some forms of violence are necessarily more harmful than others. This is a powerful idea and one that has been incorporated into even the most radical conceptions of the harms inflicted by beauty culture. However, the idea that beauty practices can be thought of as concrete manifestations of multiple forms of violence inscribed on women's bodies and embedded in subjectivity provides a possible way around this impasse.

One of the most pressing problems with Bourdieu's theories is the way in which they appear to close down the possibility of conscious awareness of and resistance to domination. Some of the empirical and theoretical work discussed in this chapter suggests that the power of symbolic violence is not absolute and that people can think and act in ways that disrupt the exercise of power and even, in some circumstances, reveal symbolic violence for what it is. Materialist feminist analyses point the way to thinking about the conditions under which domination can be questioned and resisted.

The issues raised in the chapter provide a springboard for thinking about how symbolic and other forms of violence may be implicated in the 'choices' and trajectories of beauty therapy students, and in the pedagogies and practices of their courses. It also suggests ways of understanding their conformity with or resistance to the discourses and practices which shape their experiences of being young women and beauty therapy students.

Chapter Six
Methodology and Methods: Researching Beauty Therapy Courses

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the aims of the project and set out and discuss how the research questions have arisen from the three main bodies of literature informing my work: firstly, research and theory which has illuminated the significance of beauty practices in relation to gendered inequality, subjectivity and agency (see chapters three and four); secondly, research into the learning cultures of vocational education and training and the production of gendered and classed vocational identities (see chapter two); and thirdly, theoretical and empirical work on the operation and interconnectedness of different expressions of violence in social life at macro and micro-levels (see chapter five).

I also discuss how the research is positioned in relation to feminist political and epistemological concerns with the status of experience and knowledge, and how the processes and decisions involved in sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation were shaped by these concerns. Throughout the chapter I reflect on the research process in order to emphasize my role in the production of knowledge, which is inevitably fallible and partial, and my efforts to produce credible and valid feminist research.

Aims of the research

The project has three interrelated aims. Firstly, to investigate the complex matrix of social, cultural and dispositional factors influencing young women's decisions to enroll on beauty therapy courses in further education colleges. Secondly, it seeks to understand how young women's gendered and classed dispositions are reinforced, modified or changed by their experiences on these courses. Thirdly, it is concerned with how the processes involved in shaping beauty therapy students' trajectories might be embedded in different forms of violence connected to beauty practices, interpersonal relationships, and social and economic injustice. The research therefore aims to investigate how symbolic violence as a hidden form of domination works in interaction with other forms of violence in and outside the classroom/ training salon to reproduce gendered and classed identities and inequalities. The following research questions were designed as springboards for exploring these issues.

The research questions and rationale

Question 1

How do young women account for their decision to enrol on beauty therapy courses? How and to what extent are their decisions to study beauty therapy in two further education colleges associated with gendering, (hetero)sexualizing and classed processes operating in different social and cultural fields e.g. social networks, schooling, employment, and what kind of predispositions do these processes give rise to?

Research Question 1 is designed as a springboard for exploring how students' decisions to enrol on therapy courses have been influenced by structural constraints related to gender and class and by subjective dispositions shaped by their experiences of these conditions. Students' interview accounts of why they 'chose' beauty therapy over other possible options, their perceptions of themselves as young women, learners

and future workers, their previous experience of education, and their family and friendship networks were a key source of data for addressing this question. Data from focus groups conducted at the beginning of the academic year were also useful in addressing students' perceptions of beauty practices and why beauty therapy courses are popular with young women. Tutor interview schedules were also designed to yield information about their views on why young women are attracted to beauty therapy and their perceptions of who these young women are.

As discussed in chapter two, there is large body of literature from competing perspectives on educational decision-making, with more recent Bourdieusian and feminist approaches focusing on the interplay between structural, cultural and dispositional factors in shaping educational 'choices', 'learning identities' and trajectories. This literature tends towards the view that whilst the idealized rational, strategic and reflexive 'chooser' is a fictional notion, it is also a subject position most likely to be approximated by young people from middle class backgrounds. However, some research indicates that the extremely powerful discourse of individual choice is also mobilized in the narratives of young people who have less access to the cultural, economic and social capital necessary to construct the kinds of future oriented 'choice biographies' associated with more privileged young people. Research question 1, therefore, is designed to open up an exploration of the discourses drawn on by the beauty therapy students to account for their decisions to enrol on their courses and how far these reflect different notions of rationality, reflexivity or external constraints. If students do see themselves as having 'freely chosen' their courses, this research question allows for a consideration of how far this is also due to their own gendered dispositions towards appearance practices and the assumption, discussed in chapter three, that these are voluntarily engaged in or reflect natural feminine inclinations.

There is a great deal of research on why young people tend to follow gender-typical academic and vocational pathways. Bourdieusian feminist work, for instance that of Colley (2003;2006) and Skeggs (1997), is concerned with how gendered and classed identifications or predispositions help to guide young working class women to low paid,

low status training and jobs in the care sector in which emotional labour relies on and reproduces a femininity constructed around 'the caring self'. However, the growth in commercialized personal service work and the increasing aestheticization of labour and social life, as discussed in chapter three, are arguably producing feminine subjectivities organized more emphatically around the possession of a heterosexually attractive body (Gill, 2009). This raises the question of how far the predispositions which shape girls vocational 'choices' are being constructed in relation to contemporary gendered incitements towards the 'care of the self' as much as, or more than, the incitement to care for others. Beauty therapy training, which has received little or no attention in the literature on vocational education and training, is an ideal context in which to investigate this question since beauty work is premised on the production of femininity through aesthetic labour (on workers own bodies and the bodies of others) as well as emotional labour (Black, 2004). Assuming that the types of training young people gravitate towards are already 'choosable identities' long before formal selection and filtering processes for specific vocational courses occur (Colley et al, 2003), research question 1 is designed to address the types of predispositions which may have been involved in guiding students towards their beauty therapy courses.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the curriculum, pedagogy and culture of beauty therapy courses in the two FE colleges produce specific forms of gendered, (hetero)sexualized and classed subjectivities and vocational identities? To what extent are beauty therapy students able to resist or negotiate the identities promoted by the courses?

As chapter three demonstrates, research focused on the beauty industry suggests that beauty workers may be more immersed in 'beauty culture' than most other women (Gimlin, 2001) but construct their vocational identities largely in terms of emotional labour (Ibid, 2001, Black 2004). Drawing on the research into learning identities and habitus change, discussed in chapter two, research question 1 allows for an exploration of the extent to which beauty therapy courses may help to produce an intensified

attachment to beauty practices as well as a vocational orientation towards the 'care of others'. Research emphasizing the potential of vocational learning cultures to challenge as well as reproduce gender and class stereotypes (Bloomer at al 2002) raises issues about the kinds of transformations which may take place on beauty therapy courses given the embeddedness of beauty therapy in femininity and its association with producing classed and racialized identities, as discussed in chapter three. Research Question 2 is designed to explore the extent to which beauty therapy courses open up or close down the possibility of critical reflection and the extent to which students are able to resist the dominant discourses and dispositions promoted on the courses. It also opens up an exploration of critical insight and resistance as dependent on a sense of dissonance between habitus and situation, as proposed by Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; McCall,1992; Chambers, 2005). In this sense, exploring the question of resistance involves attending to how students experience a sense of fit or dissonance between how they see themselves and the dominant habitus of their courses.

For this research question, interviews with tutors elicited data on their perceptions of the dispositions, skills, and knowledge required for 'success' on a beauty therapy course, the kinds of subject positions which tutors make available to students, and the gendered, classed and racialized meanings that adhere in them. They also yielded data on the disciplinary practices through which dispositions to beauty work are produced. Interviews with students at the beginning and towards the end of the academic year used schedules designed to elicit accounts of their experiences on, and feelings about, their courses, and how they felt the course had changed (or not) their view of themselves and others. Focus group interviews were also useful in raising issues of importance to students in relation to their courses which I then pursued in interviews. Another key source of data were observations conducted during classroom and salon training sessions. Through these, I was able to gather information about how dispositions were discursively produced in interactions between staff and students, and about the kinds of disciplinary practices enacted on the courses.

Research Question 3

To what extent can symbolic violence in and outside the classroom be said to operate in shaping the experiences and gendered and classed identities of beauty therapy students? How does this form of violence relate to other forms and expressions violence experienced by students (e.g. appearance related bullying, social/economic inequality).

As discussed in chapter three, materialist feminist accounts have understood beauty practices as produced by and producing heterogendered power relations and as causing social, psychological and physical harms. However, the issue of violence is often consigned to the margins of analysis. When it is directly addressed it is often in relation to the objectification of women as a precondition of physical/sexual violence. Even attempts to broaden the definition of violence to include 'self-inflicted' harm have struggled to move beyond the idea that beauty practices and ideologies are only 'really' violent when they can be seen as involving a direct physical assault on the body, as in the case of cosmetic surgery (Jackman, 2002; Jeffreys, 2005). However, Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence as "as internalized humiliations and legitimations of inequality and hierarchy" (Bourgois, 2001:3) allows us to consider all feminine appearance practices as implicated in the playing out of power relations on women's bodies and in the production of subjects who embody their objectification. The link between beauty culture and symbolic violence has been acknowledged by Black (2004). However, she does not extend this into analysis of how beauty practices might be implicated in broader questions about gendered violence.

Beauty therapy courses are arguably an ideal site to investigate the symbolic violence "inflicted on women by virtue of their sexed identity" (Lovell, 2004: 51). Research question 3 provides the basis for an exploration of how symbolic violence operates through students' engagement in appearance practices prior to and on their courses and how this might produce gendered and hetero(sexualized) identities and vocational dispositions. However, beauty practices are always connected to other dimensions of inequality. Hence this research question encompasses an exploration of how symbolic

violence operates through the discourses of beauty mobilized by students and their tutors to produce particular classed and racialized subjectivities.

If “violence insinuates itself into virtually every sphere of social life” (Colaguori, 2010: 391) we need to pay attention to how symbolic violence operates in a range of different contexts. Research question 3, therefore, directs attention to how symbolic violence might be implicated in students’ prior experiences of schooling, their sense of themselves as learners, their post-16 choices and their learning experiences on beauty therapy courses. Beyond this, the empirical and theoretical work discussed in chapter five, from across the disciplines of education (Herr & Anderson,2003) social psychology (James et al, 2003), anthropology (Bourgois, 2001) and gender violence studies (Coy, 2011), suggests that in order to understand how violence works to maintain domination, we need to investigate the connections between its different manifestations: symbolic, structural, economic, direct physical and psychological violence, and intrapersonal violence. Research question 3 provides a basis for exploring how gendered and classed symbolic violence might work in a dynamic relationship with the violence of structural and economic inequality, as well as forms of direct violence, for instance school-based bullying, to shape students’ trajectories and identities.

However, this research question throws up a number of epistemological and ontological questions. Whilst it is possible to ask people about economic constraints on their lives, their experiences of school bullying, or how they feel about the self or other-inflicted pain involved in some beauty practices, it is not possible to ask direct questions about symbolic violence. By its nature, symbolic violence is effective because it is hidden, buried in subjectivity and discourse, and premised on the voluntary submission of its victims. It is a “speculation on consciousness” and therefore “it often escapes the quantifiable realm of the empirical” (Colagouri, 2010: 369). However, qualitative methods allow for the investigation of processes which cannot be easily operationalized or quantified in ways demanded by positivist epistemologies. In addition, there is a sense in which the problems of researching symbolic violence are similar to those involved in any investigation of how power relations are reproduced at a micro-level. A

critical realist ontology/epistemology maintains that the existence and nature of objective social structures can only be known through the consciousness of individuals who, to varying degrees, may be unaware of the power relations through which they are constructed. Bourdieu's theory of practice has an affinity with this view. In his terms, reflexive sociology involves an account of the limits of awareness (mis-recognition and non-recognition) involved in lived experience (Calhoun, 1999). The role of the reflexive social researcher is to unmask the operation of symbolic violence hidden behind commonsense discourses and understandings of the world, a view that resonates with the commitment to critical reflexivity in feminist methodologies. However, this raises questions about how researchers, also subject to the unconscious workings of habitus, can know symbolic violence for what it is and make it visible. Bourdieu's method is based on the necessity of making a break with familiar and taken for granted conceptions of the world (Jenkins, 1992). Just as the possibility of a critical consciousness may be occasioned by the experience of dissonance between dispositions and dominant habitus within a field (McCall, 1992), some writers following Bourdieu have suggested that symbolic violence becomes visible when "tiny cracks appear in the legitimacy of institutional authority" (Herr & Anderson, 2003: 422). Herr & Anderson argue that examining critical incidents- "surprises", "problematic situations" (Schon, 1983 cited in Ibid: 422) or "highly charged moments" (Tripp, 1993, cited in ibid: 422) can reveal the normative assumptions at work in a situation and thus provide a way of "studying the invisibility of the phenomenon and interrupting its redefinition as a non-issue" (Herr & Anderson, 2003:422). I would argue that what characterizes critical incidents is contradiction and paradox. Though I did not set out to undertake a critical incident study, during the process of interpretation I became aware that the situations and narratives in which symbolic violence seemed most apparent were ones that highlighted contradictions- between the perspectives of participants (most notably between students and tutors) and within their accounts. Participants were sometimes aware of these contradictions and other times they were not. For instance, in chapter eight and nine I discuss the way in which tutors position themselves as caring for the welfare and longer term interests of their students at the same time as mobilizing gendered and classed discourses which consign most of them to an inevitable future of

low- paid, part-time work, marriage and motherhood. In this example, the discourse of care may act as symbolic violence obscuring, even from tutors themselves, the reproduction of inequality, and legitimizing economic and structural violence. Contradiction, paradox and violence are themes that weave through my interpretation of all the data from interviews, focus groups and observations.

The methodological/epistemological framework

Positioning myself as a researcher in the "contested and shifting locations [of feminism] that lie between the unacceptable rock of extreme positivism and the unacceptable hard place of extreme relativism" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 1999) was not an easy task. On the one hand, my study seeks to excavate the 'realities' underneath experience and to make visible the structural relations of oppression obscured by dominant ideologies and the workings of symbolic violence. However, this raises a number of important questions at the heart of feminist debates about the production of knowledge and about the status of experience in producing valid and useful feminist research.

One defining characteristic of feminist approaches to research is the importance placed on the legitimacy of women's self-understandings and on 'giving voice' to those who have been traditionally marginalized in the process of knowledge production (Skinner et al, 2005:12; Maynard and Purvis, 1995:23). This position is one that has influenced my research, partly because participants' experiences and the self-understandings that grow out of these are what moves them to acquiesce with or resist dominant power relations (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 1999). However, Gorelick (1991) points out that whilst this view represents a significant moment in the feminist critique of positivistic science, subjectivist research using purely inductive methods is unable to move beyond descriptive accounts of experience to an understanding of the social relations beneath or constitutive of that experience and thus to the production of feminist knowledge as a basis for social transformation. This points to a major contradiction in feminist methodology which Gorelick, citing Marx, characterizes in the following way:

> If social relations occur 'behind the backs of the actors', how can the researcher know them, unless she claims a source of knowledge and understanding beyond that of her respondents? If she makes that claim, doesn't she run the risk of elitism? But if she does not attempt to uncover social relations and structures of oppression that may be hidden from her respondents' view, is she not limiting her contribution to them and to feminist science and political practice?"(Ibid, 1991: 466).

This dilemma is evident in some of the research on women's use of beauty practices. For instance, in her ethnographic work on women's decisions to have cosmetic surgery, Davis acknowledges that the emphasis on "the particularities of individual women's experiences…"runs the risk of suspending attention from the systemic or structured patterns of women's involvement in the cultural beauty system" (Davis, 1995:180). As Black (2004) argues, ethnographic approaches, including those that have set out to "bridge the gap" between empirical and theoretical interpretations, as is the case with Davis's work, are vulnerable to allowing "natural empathy…[to]…negate a critical understanding of the practices involved" (Ibid:186).

The status of experience and the question of how and what we can know has been problematized by post-stucturalist and post-modernist theorists for whom the issue is not simply about whose interpretations of experience should be privileged but whether experience is a valid basis for producing knowledge in the first place. The argument rests on a number of assumptions. Firstly, that experience is never transparent and is always mediated through discourse. In this sense, there is no 'real' world hidden behind experience and waiting to be uncovered. Secondly, individuals are constituted as social subjects through historically variable and unstable discourses. Because of this, there can be no fixed or authentic essence to subjectivity that would allow us to treat women (or, any other subjects) and their experience as the basis for critical enquiry and social transformation. From this view, social researchers should be asking not how subjects come to understand and collude with or transform oppressive conditions but rather how

social subjects are constructed through discourses and “how power is exercised, how conformity works, how we come to be the sort of …. selves we are” (Holland et al, 1998:21).

Ramazanoglu and Holland have argued that ignoring these critiques “can undermine the validity of knowledge produced within feminist assumptions” (Ramazanoglu & Holland 1999: 382). In refusing to engage with these insights we risk “claiming some epistemological privilege which gives feminism special access to experience as data” (Ibid, 1999:381). However, they are clear that abandoning the ‘knowing feminist subject’ has serious political implications for feminism. Whilst subjectivity may be produced through discourse, it is also rooted in experience which is social, economic and embodied. As such, the material factors manifested through experience must be part of an analysis of the operation and consequences of gendered social practices. We need to know how institutionalized power relations “actually impinge on people’s lives” and this necessitates treating “experience as a source of knowledge” (Ibid, 1999: 382). Whilst we may reject the idea that any absolute truth about the world exists outside of how we construct it through language, the construction itself relates to “something that matters” (Ibid, 1999:388); material circumstance, barriers to education or employment, institutionalized gender power relations.

In light of these arguments, I am claiming a methodological position which is rooted in the political and emancipatory concerns of materialist feminism, but also draws on the insights of post-structuralist theory. Firstly, I assume there are ‘real’ material factors, or in Bourdieu’s terms, objective social conditions, at work in shaping the experiences of the young women in this study. I focus particularly on the effects of gender and class in mediating their access to post-16 education, their future access to the labour market and the significance of beauty practices in their lives. Where my data allow, I also consider how racialization operates in these processes. This is not the foundationalist position of positivism in which truth is assumed to exist independently of ‘knowers’. Rather, I draw on Guba and Lincoln’s understanding of critical theory in which the

foundations of truth and knowledge are located “in the specific historical, economic….and social infrastructures of oppression” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:204).

Secondly, I assume that experience provides a way of accessing and understanding the operation of power whilst holding that it is not a ‘window on to reality’ but always already an interpretation expressed through language or some other means of symbolic representation (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 1999;386). Making sense of experience in order to “work out the politics of its construction” (Scott, 1992, cited in ibid: 387) requires re-interpreting those interpretations and this process is always open to contestation and “always therefore political” (Scott, 1992, cited in ibid, 2008:54). What this view reflects is an attempt to bring together post-structural epistemologies with feminist standpoint theory. The latter is useful here because of its claim that all knowledge is socially situated and partial. In a research context, this is the case for both the subject of knowledge (the researcher and her epistemic community) and the object (the researched and the social conditions of her life). On this view, the validity of knowledge relies not on empiricist standards of impartiality or neutrality- the ‘view from nowhere’- but on the conditions of its production being subjected to interrogation so that it becomes an object of research as much as the ‘substantive’ issues being investigated. The central importance given to reflexivity in feminist and other epistemological approaches requires researchers/authors to:

> …position themselves in relation to their objects of study so that one may assess researchers’ knowledge claims in terms of situated aspects of their social selves and reveal their (often hidden) doxic values and assumptions (Maton, 2003: 54)

In this way, subjects and objects of knowledge are effectively “placed on the same critical plane” (Harding, 1993:69). The aim of minimizing inequality in knowledge production and, by implication, the objectification of participants, is ideally promoted by the use of methods which bring participants into the research process in a direct and collaborative way. However, whilst Harding and others maintain that “starting off

research from women's lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts…..of the whole social order." (Ibid: 1993:56), the production of critical, emancipatory knowledge relies on the interpretation of experience by a situated knower with a critical and theoretically informed awareness of the power structures shaping those lives. Without this, research collapses into relativism (Ibid:1993). If the job of the feminist researcher is to "disclose for women how their…everyday world is organized…by social processes which are not knowable through ordinary means" (Smith, 1987:6), avoiding objectification altogether becomes an impossibility.

I have tried to ensure that the participants' interpretations of their experiences are represented by placing their 'voices' at centre stage whilst trying to make my own position/s as clear as possible, and the differences between their interpretations and mine as explicit as possible. What the participants contributed is, of course, foundational to this study. They contributed with their time, their stories and their insights, and by allowing me in to their classrooms. I am not the same 'situated knower' as when I started the research because of their accounts. My understanding is now more nuanced and more attuned to the interplay of different social forces in women's lives and in the production of subjectivity. However, the study is not meant to be an exercise in 'individualistic reflexivity' (Maton, 2003). These changes are important because they have helped to produce what I hope is valid and potentially useful research. Nevertheless, it was my decisions which ultimately determined every stage of the process from inception to research design to interpretation and representation. Even though participants' voices are audible, I decided what parts of their accounts should be included and the analytical frameworks in which they should be understood (see Skeggs, 1997:29). This exercise of power was in turn shaped by my institutionalized position in an academic context. Whilst the research was motivated by my politics and commitment to feminism it was also motivated by my interests in attaining a PhD. This was dramatized by my sense of urgency or irritation when students did not turn up for interviews or when rooms booked for these were commandeered by staff for other purposes. In such cases, it was often an effort to 'step back', consider other options (Corcoran, 2005: 133) and to see these events as part of

the ethnographic process. I had to acknowledge that my investment in the research was vastly greater than that of participants.

Methods

My strategy for undertaking this project is a collective case study (Punch, 1998; Cresswell, 1998) of accredited beauty therapy courses in two further education colleges, one in a semi-rural area and one in an urban area in the south west of England. There were three main reasons for selecting two colleges rather than focusing on one site. Firstly, having worked in further education colleges for a number of years, I was aware of how difficult it is for over-stretched tutors to find the time to engage with projects outside their teaching roles. The constantly changing demands made of FE teachers mean that whilst they may be open to supporting a research project on their curriculum area, it will inevitably be placed fairly low down on their list of priorities. My rationale was that if one college withdrew from the study or was unable to facilitate my access to participants because of these pressures I could continue my fieldwork in the other. It also seemed appropriate to use multiple sites as a way of gaining a broader insight into beauty therapy training. Given the time limitations on the study, it was not feasible to select more than two colleges and these were chosen for the similarity in their beauty programmes (both ran NVQ courses). At the time, I imagined that a further benefit of this approach, and one more in line with the usual reason for collective case studies, would be to make comparisons between sites. For this reason the opportunity to study one college in a semi-rural area of South West England, and one in an urban area, seemed to provide a sound basis for analyzing my findings in terms of the different locations and demographics of the colleges. In practice, I have not focused on these issues although this would no doubt have thrown up interesting and important information about how young women's post-16 choices and future expectations are produced, particularly in light of work that points to the importance of location in shaping learning and vocational identities (Ball, 2000). Though its omission can be seen as weakness of the study, I chose to focus on the sites as one instrumental case study

(Stake, 1994 cited in Punch, 1998) in the sense that I wanted to accomplish more than just an understanding of a particular case, and to use beauty therapy courses as an ideal site for investigating broader issues. It seemed appropriate, then, to use multiple sites as a way for exploring the significance of beauty practices and other gendered and classed process in shaping the identities and trajectories of young women. Whilst generalizability is not the aim of qualitative research (Fielding 1993), investigating NVQ beauty therapy courses across two sites has possibly strengthened my claims to some level of analytical, as opposed to statistical, generalization (Yin, 1999).

The research involved a longitudinal and ethnographic approach to investigating the perspectives and experiences of students and teaching staff in both colleges over one academic year from September 2009 to July 2010. I chose a longitudinal approach in order to investigate how students' subjectivities and their perceptions might change over the year and might be shaped by their experiences on the course (as well as by their experience of other social fields including families, friendship networks and prior education). Having undertaken pilot research for my Masters dissertation, I was aware that studying beauty courses over a short period and collecting data through a small number of focus groups limited the type and quality of data obtainable and was therefore not an adequate approach to addressing complex questions about subjectivity, agency, consent and resistance. I needed an approach that would allow me to investigate the relationship between structural inequalities and social/cultural practice (i.e. between gender, class and beauty practices within the context of formal vocational training). I needed, therefore, to 'get close' to the ways in which young women experienced social structure, the cultural practices and discourses of beauty and the institutionalization of these in further education. My reading of Skeggs (1997), and later of Willis (1977), together with encouragement from my supervisors, suggested that my research should take the form of an ethnography. Willis defines this form of research as being concerned with how:

> the cultural viewpoint of the oppressed, their 'hidden knowledges' and resistances as well as the basis on which their entrapping 'decisions' are taken in

> some sense of liberty, but which nevertheless help to produce structure (Willis, 1981:201).

There are, however, some important senses in which my research could be seen as less ethnographical than the studies that inspired my approach. Skeggs suggests that ethnography, at least in its modernist form as understood by Marcus (1992,cited in Skeggs,1997), is defined by its intensity, longevity and its access to multiple aspects of respondents' lives, researched through a range of different methods (one of the most important being participant observation). Her own research with care students was conducted over twelve years, including three years of in-the-field participant observation combined with other methods of data collection including interviews and informal meetings with college tutors, family, partners and friends. On a three year ESRC studentship this kind of immersion in the field was impossible.

In practice my study can be best characterized as an ethnography using a 'selective, intermittent time mode' (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). I took a flexible and opportunistic approach to site visits, doing interviews, focus groups and observations around student and staff timetables or whether individual tutors felt it 'appropriate' for me to sit in on particular teaching sessions or activities. However, although on any one occasion I might visit a college on for an agreed purpose (e.g. to undertake interviews or observe a practical session) I also used the opportunity to 'hang around' afterwards (always on the basis of agreement with staff). This often meant that I could talk to students and tutors informally, and sometimes people outside the core research group including learning support staff who worked with 'less able' students during teaching sessions. I found that staff were often interested in the research and were keen to suggest avenues of enquiry. These conversations sometimes resulted in invitations to sit in on teaching sessions and other activities, for instance open days and taster sessions. Many of the research activities were therefore opportunistic. In these conversations, tutors were often very open about institutional issues and how these affected their teaching and their ability to make autonomous decisions, for instance about the recruitment and selection process. They also talked to me about students- 'good' ones and 'difficult'

ones, and about the problems of 'getting them through' their courses and meeting their retention and achievement 'benchmarks' as they were required, at all costs, to do. This provided some useful background information which I was sometimes able to pursue further in interviews.

My research involved two main groups of participants; the beauty students themselves and a number of tutors/course managers. Initially, I had imagined it might be possible to draw other significant actors into the research, particularly people from the students' own social and family networks. However, given my time and workload constraints, this was never really feasible. Hence my understanding of students' lives outside college is drawn solely from my interpretations of their own accounts. Perhaps more feasibly, I had hoped to gain access to the students outside of college, for instance, through informal meetings in social settings. However, this also proved too problematic to pursue as a strategy. The vast majority of the students who agreed to be interviewed were happy to do so as long as these took place in college time. For some, paid work, family commitments or social life were a barrier to any participation beyond mid-afternoon on college days. However, as with tutors I was able to meet and talk with students informally (see my comments on informal meetings below)

My own participation in the day-to-day college activities of the students was more limited than I would have wanted from a methodological perspective. A few colleagues were curious about why I was not intending to participate in the salon teaching sessions by volunteering as a 'client'. The idea that this would have allowed me to get closer to the everyday practices on the course and to gain a better understanding of their meaning in students' lives, is founded on sound methodological reasoning and the central tenets of ethnographic participant observation (Van Maanen, 1988). However, the assumption that it should be easy or even enjoyable for me as a woman to engage in facials, make-up or eyebrow shaping naturalizes the connection between women and beauty practices and ignores the political importance for many lesbian, and indeed heterosexual, feminists of refusing to produce a normative feminine appearance. This raises a number of methodological and ethical issues. Firstly, it highlights the

impossibility of keeping oneself as a researcher out of the research, contrary to the claims of researcher neutrality central to positivist science (Harding, 1993). This decision, along with very many others, was informed by my own social and political position. My refusal to engage directly with students in the activities at the centre of this research could be read as positioning myself as an aloof observer imposing an objectifying gaze on research subjects who 'know no better'. This kind of dilemma is addressed in Kelly et al who raise:

> the troubling issue of what we do when our understandings and interpretations of women's accounts [and practices] would either not be shared by some of them, and/or represent a form of challenge or threat to their perceptions, choices and coping strategies" (Kelly et al, 1994:37).

The problematic nature of 'empathy', which is sometimes understood to arise from a shared gender position between researcher and researched, is evident in some of the research on women's use of beauty practices. For instance, in Davis' ethnographic study of cosmetic surgery, she acknowledges that the emphasis on "the particularities of individual women's experiences….. "runs the risk of suspending attention from the systemic or structured patterns of women's involvement in the cultural beauty system" (Davis, 1995:180). As Black (2004) argues, such approaches are vulnerable to allowing "natural empathy…[to]..negate a critical understanding of the practices involved" (Ibid:186).

Whilst I cannot claim that acting as a 'client' during salon teaching sessions would necessarily have stopped me from thinking critically, non-engagement may sometimes be a useful strategy in maintaining a critical distance from the social practices being researched. Being a feminist lesbian who does not engage in feminine appearance practices in the same way as participants did not mean that it was easy to think outside normative conceptions of these practices. For instance, it was only after observing the activities in training salons for six or seven months that I began to realize the significance of the repetitive scrutiny, maintenance and presentation of particular parts

of the body in producing or reproducing subjects who objectify themselves and other women and (often) experience this as pleasurable and 'empowering'. This had not been obvious to me in spite of my critical stance because it is a normalized part of contemporary femininity and because few of us, lesbian or straight, escape the imperative of bodily self-surveillance (Chapkis, 1986).

One of the strengths of being an outsider in the field , as standpoint theories assert, is that the sense of dissonance generated by a marginalized position may offer a particular epistemic privilege, "a certain critical insight" (McNay, 2000:53, Bourdieu, 2001, Skeggs, 1997), as I discuss in chapter five. However, my lack of cultural capital in the field of beauty practices contrasted sharply with other differences between myself and the participants. The power dynamics in this relationship were particularly emphasized in the case of students as young, mostly working class women (McCarry, 2005). They were differences informed by my privilege and power as a middle class researcher connected to an elite institution.

The research groups

The students:

Though the NVQ Beauty Therapy programmes in both colleges comprised of courses at Levels 1, 2 and 3, only level 1 and 2 students took part in the research. Because I wanted to explore how the courses shaped student's identities over time it made sense to select those in the earlier stages of their programmes. A total of 35 students between the ages of 16 and 20 from across both colleges (17 in college A and 18 in college B) participated in focus groups and/or interviews. Fourteen of these (8 from College A, 6 from college B) were interviewed in the first three months of their course and 13 were interviewed again in the last two months (one student at College A was unavailable for a second interview). I refer to these 14 students as the core group because I had most contact with them over the year and because their accounts have provided most of the

data for exploring the research questions, particularly for thinking about how students' identities were shaped by their course experiences over the year. The table below is a summary profile for this group. I have used the information in the last four columns as indicative of students' class and ethnic backgrounds and their access to cultural and economic capital.

Figure 1: Core group students

Participant	NVQ Course Level	College	Age *	Quals on entry to current course	EMA*	Parents employment (M)-Mother (F)-Father	Ethnicity (from college data)
Anna	1	A	16	0 GCSE***	YES	Admin(M), Driver (F)	White British
Jenna	1	A	19	0GCSEs	YES	Care worker (M)	White British
Natalie	1	A	16	2GCSEs	YES	Catering (M)	White British
Louisa	1	B	16	0 GCSE	NO	Cafe manager (M)	White British
Alex	1	B	17	Level 2 Diploma	YES	Admin (M) Electrician (F)	White British
Amber	1	B	16	0 GCSE	YES	Cleaner (M)	White British
Jaime	2	A	16	2GCSEs	NO	Childminder (M)	White British
^Leila	2	A	17	1 GCSE, NVQ L1 Beauty therapy	YES	Unemployed (M and F)	Black British
Tania	2	A	17	Level 2 Diploma	YES	Unemployed (M)	White British
Abigail	2	A	20	Level 3 Diploma	NO	Retail assistant (M)	White British
^Chelsea	2	A	17	4GCSEsNVQ L1 Beauty therapy	YES	Childminder (M)	Dual heritage White and Black Caribbean
^Kelly	2	B	17	0 GCSE, NVQ L1 Beauty therapy	YES	Cleaner (M) Plumber (F)	White British
Emma	2	B	17	4 A/S Levels	YES	Childminder (M) Head teacher (F)	White British
^Lindsey	2	B	17	0 GCSE, L1 B	YES	Care worker (M) Painter/decorator (F)	White British

*Age at beginning of academic year

** Education Maintenance Allowance was introduced in 2004/5 to encourage post-16 participation amongst young people from low income households. Payments were means-tested and made directly to students. It was scrapped, in the face of concerted protest from students and teachers, and activists by the coalition government in 2011.

*** Attainment of GCSE defined as grade C or above.

^These students had completed a Level 1 beauty therapy NVQ the previous year.

The tutors:

Seven tutors, one of whom was also a curriculum manager, were interviewed for this study.

Figure 2: Tutors

Tutor	**College**
Carol	College B
Sally	College B
Philippa (Curriculum Manager)	College B
Anne	College B
Sharon	College A
Marina	College A
Karen	College A

The research schedule:

Figure 3: the research schedule College A

Activity	**Participants**
Focus group	9 NVQ level 1 students
Focus group	9 NVQ level 2 students
Initial one- to-one interviews	4 NVQ level 1 students
Initial one- to-one interviews	5 NVQ level 2 students
One-one –interviews	3 tutors
Follow-up interviews	3 NVQ level 1 students
Follow-up interviews	5 NVQ level 2 students`
End of year focus group	5 level 1 students
Observations throughout the year in classrooms, training salons and 'taster sessions'	Tutors, support workers, students (core group and other)

Figure 4: The research schedule: College B

Activity	**Participants**
Focus group	9 NVQ level 1 students
Focus group	8 NVQ level 2 students
Initial one- to-one interviews	3 NVQ level 1 students
Initial one- to-one interviews	3 NVQ level 2 students
One-one –interviews	4 tutors
Follow-up interviews	3 NVQ level 1 students
Follow-up interviews	3 NVQ level 2 students`
End of year focus group	5 level 1 students
Observations throughout the year in classrooms, training salons and 'taster sessions'	Tutors, support workers, students (core group and other)

Gathering the data through multiple methods: strategies and issues

Observations

The classroom and training salon observations were a crucial means of understanding the culture, pedagogies and discourses informing NVQ beauty therapy courses. Beyond this, they were also a way in to the world of 'professional' beauty practices and the technologies of femininity which inform it. I began the observations at the beginning of the academic year as I needed to understand the setting in which students learn (or not) to be beauty therapists. Initially, I treated my visits to the training salons as a way of sensitizing myself to the symbolic and sensory dimensions of the spaces- to the décor, visual imagery, smells and sounds, interactions and activities which were part of it. The first few visits were also, in a sense, desensitizing in that my initial feeling of otherness- of being an outsider in an oppressive environment - began to dissipate. No doubt this was an unconscious survival strategy on my part, but one that lead to a paradoxical

sense of dissociation and increasing familiarity. With hindsight, this may partly explain my anxiety about whether I could be 'immersed' enough to gain any meaningful insights into perspectives of the 'researched', or 'detached' enough to gain any critical insight into their worlds. This dilemma articulates with the well documented tensions in ethnographic research between the idea of 'going native' and the impossibility of observing from a 'neutral' position (Mason, 2002). Though it is impossible to take up any stable and uncomplicated position on the 'observer-participant continuum', the tensions propelled me into a continuous reflexivity about the kinds of positions and identities I was taking up and the possible effects of this on the participants (Coffey, 1999). For instance, although I often joined small groups of students whilst they were being shown how to perform an eyebrow tint or a manicure, and interacted with students whilst they were practicing techniques on each other, I also spent a considerable amount of time observing at a distance from the activity. I was aware that spending too much time talking to students or staff might be felt as intrusive, but by positioning myself in the corner of a salon away from the activity I risked be seen as an equally intrusive or threatening presence. Before I began observations two tutors were particularly concerned about whether I was going to be scrutinizing their performance. I tried to assure them that the point of the observations was to find out about students' experiences on their courses and that I was not there to 'inspect' the quality of teaching and learning. With hindsight this was perhaps an obfuscation since I did make judgments related to this (see my discussion about the teaching of anatomy and physiology in chapter ten). Very often, tutors would approach me after the session when students were clearing up to find out what my impressions had been. I interpreted this partly as a reflection of their perception of me, because of my connection to a university, as an "official representative of legitimate knowledge" (Skeggs, 1997:37), and one who had the power to informally validate or invalidate their expertise as teachers. In order to detract from this idea, I often talked about my own experience of the difficulties of being an FE teacher and this seemed to establish some rapport between us. However, a possible downside of these conversations was that they may have aligned me in students' eyes with the authority structures of the college, or reinforced this alignment given that the tutors were always the main gatekeepers and

'key informants' (Mason, 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) with regard to my access to the field. In this respect, it may have compromised the rapport I was then able to establish with students.

I did not use a formal observation schedule and felt that doing so would distract attention from unexpected events and interactions. In this sense, my approach was close to the 'unsystematic naturalistic observation' used by Goffman (Punch, 1998:184). Initially, however, this led to a sense that the impressions I was forming were vague and arbitrary (Mason, 2002). As time went on, I began to prepare for sessions with brief notes about the themes that were beginning to 'emerge' from the interviews and from previous observations. This helped to 'sharpen' my focus and sensitize me to the way in which particular discourses were being used or particular paradoxes played out. For example, during salon sessions, especially when external clients were due to arrive, students were continually told to behave 'professionally', a concept that was ubiquitous in interview accounts, particularly those of tutors. The observations allowed me to see how this idea was mobilized in practice to regulate students' behaviour and appearance in ways that are incongruent with dominant notions of professionalism. I was also able to pick up on non-verbal elements of interaction in the salons and to make more sense of the embodied nature of practices, for instance the infliction of pain and its normalization through the quasi-rituals of leg, eyebrow and bikini waxing.

In an effort to minimize intrusion I tried to keep note taking as inconspicuous as possible whilst recording enough information to make more detailed notes as soon as possible afterwards. This allowed me to concentrate more on the moment. However, where I felt that exchanges between participants were particularly significant I tried to record these verbatim. I also recorded my interpretations. However, regardless of my efforts to minimize intrusion, the presence of a researcher will always affect behaviour and be actively interpreted by participants in some way (Mason, 2002: 92). For each observation session I tried to make a written record of how this might be happening.

Focus groups

The rationale for conducting focus groups at the beginning of the year was to get to know the students, for them to get to know me, and to begin exploring questions about their reasons for enrolling on the course, and their perceptions of their course in its early stages. I also introduced the issue of gender and gendered careers by asking participants to respond to photographs of women engaged in various gender- typical and a-typical activities. The groups were useful not just in generating preliminary data, but also in helping me to gauge the 'needs' of individuals, the level at which they were willing or able to discuss issues and the kinds of techniques that I might use in order to elicit information in the interviews. For instance, in both colleges, level 2 students appeared more engaged and able or willing to participate in the discussions than the Level 1 students. In response to this, I tailored interviews and activities in the end of year focus groups accordingly.

Since I was interested in the shared meanings held by these young women in relation to beauty therapy and gender, focus groups seemed to be an appropriate method for maximizing interaction between them (May, T, 2001; Finch, H& Lewis, J, 2003) and encouraging spontaneity and disclosure (Punch, K, 1998). In addition, focus groups have the potential to encourage communication and critical reflection amongst participants in the exchange and validation of experiences (Clough, P & Nutbrown, C, 2002) and for this reason can be particularly useful for feminists and other critical researchers.

All focus groups were organized through tutors and took place in classrooms during timetabled teaching sessions so all participants were attending the same class. For the initial focus groups, tutors agreed to allow one hour during which time they and any student who did not wish to participate left the classroom. In each case I asked for a maximum of ten volunteers. I explained what the research was about and what the focus group would entail and then distributed and explained the consent form (Appendix 3), the ethics guiding the research, including the need for confidentiality about what was said in the sessions, and their right to withdraw from the group at any point. I also

explained how any information I used would be anonymized. For all sessions, only two students left the groups at this point. Once the forms had been signed I asked students to agree ground rules and these were written on a flip chart or whiteboard. All students agreed to the sessions being recorded. I used a digital tape recorder for this purpose although my omni-directional microphone sometimes proved inadequate for picking up conversation on the margins of the group when participants spoke particularly quietly. I chose not to use a video recorder because I would have been unable to set up the equipment before the session and because I felt this would have been inappropriate on what was effectively my first in- depth interaction with the students and could deter further participation. I made notes where possible as an aide- memoire for matching names of participants to conversation which seemed particularly important. However, when participants talked over each other, it was often not possible to identify individual speakers.

In each focus group I used a schedule of open-ended prompt questions to introduce discussion (see Appendix 9.) Following Spradley (1979, cited in May, T, 2001), I began with descriptive questions about their course and its content and then asked them to address more evaluative questions including what they liked and disliked about their course, why they had chosen it and what or who had influenced their choices. Through the experience of conducting focus groups as part of my Masters research I was aware that simply asking questions would probably not stimulate interaction between all members of the group, particularly because of participants' lack of familiarity with me and with the situation (Finch & Lewis, 2003). I therefore used other methods in an effort to encourage confidence and engagement. Firstly, I used photographs (shown as PowerPoint slides) of women engaged in various activities, for instance in gender typical and a-typical work roles and sports. Photographs or other visual imagery are often used in sociological and ethnological research to elicit personal narratives and to gain access to shared or conflicting meanings (Schwartz,1989) particularly where it may be otherwise difficult to engage participants' interest in a particular issue or where direct conventional interview techniques alone might struggle to access people's perceptions in relation to sensitive issues or complex areas such as identity or appearance (Harper,

2002, Frost, 2001). The emotional immediacy of photographs can allow participants to respond "without hesitation [because by] providing informants with a task similar to viewing a family album, the strangeness of the interview situation is averted" (Shwartz, 1989: 151-152). Some of the photographs portrayed non-normative images of women (e.g. rugby teams and a women body-builder). Their often powerful and immediate responses to these allowed me to gain an initial insight into how participants constructed femininity (or at least how femininity was constructed discursively within the groups) and how they positioned themselves in relation to it.

Secondly, I used a small group exercise in which I asked participants to work in pairs or groups of three to write down two reasons why, in their opinions, young women were attracted to beauty therapy. These responses were then written on a flip chart and used as a basis for a whole group discussion in which participants raised issues about choice, subject preferences, appearance and cultural pressures.

On the whole, these exercises proved useful in engaging most of the participants in discussions which uncovered both consensus and disagreement about what was and was not appropriate for women to do and to look like and why beauty therapy might be a preferred option. Participants in the Level 2 groups were generally more reflective and able/willing to discuss the issues and listen to others' opinions. The Level 1 groups, in comparison, were noisy and less focused. There was a clear divide between those who talked and those who did not. Although this could be interpreted in process terms as a characteristic of early stage 'group development' (Finch & Lewis, 2003), it may also have reflected the kinds of group dynamics that were already developing amongst students. Some feminists have argued that focus groups can mitigate the power relations between participants and researcher by diminishing the researcher's influence on the discussion (Kitzinger, 1995). Others have suggested the same kind of potential for reducing power dynamics between young people in focus groups (see McCarry, 2005). However, as McCarry argues, it is "an oversimplification to argue that a group of children/young people can negate the complex effect of these phenomena" (Ibid: 96).

I also conducted an end of year focus groups with level 1 students in each college. The aims of these were to gather data on issues that I felt had not been adequately covered in interviews, including information on students' perceptions of beauty practices in relation to the 'sexualization' of culture. In these sessions I used some simple data from attitude surveys (Girlguiding uk, 2009, American Psychological Association, 2007) to elicit responses to findings that a large proportion of young women in the UK and US would consider cosmetic surgery or becoming a 'glamour model'. These groups also provided an additional opportunity for participants to review their courses and discuss their experiences over the year.

The interviews- students

First-stage interviews with students used a semi -structured schedule with open questions designed to cover the topics of interest to me as well as to allow, as far as possible, respondents to raise issues independently and therefore to maximize "qualitative depth" (May, 2001:124). The main topics included reasons for choosing a beauty therapy course, influences and experiences of school, family and friendship networks, perceptions of 'beauty' and early perceptions of the course (see appendix 6). They also included questions designed to elicit perceptions of disadvantage or advantage in their own lives. Both first-stage and follow-up interviews lasted between 40 minutes and one hour.

Follow- up interviews towards the end of the year, also using a semi-structured schedule, were individually adapted on the basis of initial interviews to draw out data on changes in perceptions of themselves and the course over the year (see appendix 7). However, a main topic of these interviews was the students' perception of their own and others' appearance. Because this was likely to be a sensitive issue I used photographs taken by the interviewees as a focus for discussion and to limit the amount of direct questioning from me. 'Auto-driven photo-elicitation' (Frith & Harcourt, 2007) has been widely used in ethnography and anthropology to allow participants to capture rich and complex information about their lives and is founded on the idea that " [s]ome emotions,

thoughts, feelings and experiences are more easily or variously expressed in a visual rather than verbal form" (Ibid: 1342). In addition, questions of appearance, the body and self-identity are ideal sites for the use of this technique (Harper, 2002). My intention, however, was not to use the photographs as a forms of data in themselves but rather as tools for eliciting narratives about how participants understood their own lives and identities. This helped to alleviate anxieties (expressed by some participants) about lack of control over the images. I made it clear that the photographs would be their property, would not be reproduced, and that I would not be making or keeping any copies.

After the initial interviews, I offered each respondent a disposable camera and asked them to take photographs of or about themselves and their daily lives and then to return it to me. Some participants opted to use their own cameras or mobile phones instead and one student emailed me a set of photographs which I deleted after printing. I explained that the photographs might be a good way of talking about their own 'self-image' and any other issues of importance to them. Six of the 13 interviewees produced photographs between the first and second interviews and in the main these proved an extremely powerful way of encouraging the production of biographical narratives and reflection on their feelings about appearance. Where photographs were not available, questions on this topic were couched in third-person terms and, drawing on questions used by Frost (2001) in her work on body-hatred, asked respondents to talk about 'what kinds of people' might feel happy/unhappy with the way they look. Subsequent questions then asked how doing a beauty therapy course might affect how people feel about themselves. Most students were keen to talk about these issues but interviews in which students talked at length about the their negative 'self-image' and the pain involved in this raised a number of uncomfortable issues about the extent to which 'speaking out' is necessarily an 'empowering' process. My interpretation is that some students used the interviews as a form of 'therapeutic confessional'. Lister's (2003) use of Foucault to discuss research on sexual abuse survivors is useful here in highlighting the power dynamics involved in the 'incitement to speak' and in the way in which that speech is vulnerable to being inscribed "into hegemonic structures, thereby

producing docile subjects who submit themselves to the judgement of experts" (Ibid: 47). As a researcher, it was not my job to direct participants' interpretations of their experiences, but as a feminist, and one who had incited this speech in the first place, I felt I had a responsibility to validate any insights they had into the social causes of their experiences and to encourage conversation about this. However, the extent to which a single interview can become a consciousness raising experience is limited. There is no room and no ethical justification in this context for challenging a participant's belief that beauty practices are essential to her self-esteem and in this sense the interviews could be seen as a confessional space in which such 'truths' were (unintentionally) legitimated.

A number of other issues arose from student interviews. As discussed earlier, I allowed students to talk about issues of importance to them, even when these did not coincide with my schedule. Sometimes these issues dominated the interview. However, although this meant I was sometimes unable to cover all topics, in several cases interviewees raised unexpected issues, for instance about abuse or harassment which allowed me to consider how I might investigate connections between different forms of violence.

A second issue was the 'problem' of silence. Two Level 1 interviewees were particularly reluctant to respond to questions or engage in conversation in any depth. In both cases, they saw themselves as marginal participants on their courses who 'kept themselves to themselves', had one or two friends but had little social engagement with most other students. Both had also been very quiet in the initial focus groups. It is possible that these silences can be explained by the pressure that some students may have felt to participate (see my discussion of consent below) but it may also raise a number of other issues. However I couched my questions, I was asking participants to 'account for themselves'. However, such invitations need to take account the context of contemporary neo-liberal forms of regulation which demand the production of autonomous, knowing selves (Gonick, 2006) with coherent 'choice biographies' (Du Bois- Raymond, 1998). In this context, silence may be one response used by those

without the resources to construct their identities in these terms. However, Marnina Gonick (2006), citing Spivak's (1988) question "Can the Subaltern Speak?", suggests that "speaking out of difference" in a way that is "both intelligible and yet not re-inscribed into the very normative frameworks that constitute the difference is the (impossible)task of the subaltern" (Gonick, 2006:448). The most 'silent' interviewees were both positioned as other in the predominantly White, heterosexual context of their beauty therapy courses. Leila was one of only two Black students on her course and Alex was othered by her non-feminine appearance and her relative lack of interest in conventional beauty practices (by her distance from normative heterofemininity). However, there may well have been other reasons why these students used silence or withdrawal in the context of their courses as a strategy, whether conscious or unconscious, of self-protection. There was possibly even more reason for these young women to 'use' silence in an interview situation with an adult stranger. What this might point to is the necessity of finding other ways to allow young women to be heard. For instance, Gonick's (Ibid, 2006) work on feminist pedagogies suggests that methods which allow for the exteriorization of different concepts of the self such as story telling or other ways of constructing fantasy identifications may be more effective than asking girls to talk directly about themselves. It may also be the case that more informal engagement with students would have established closer and more reciprocal relationships (Skeggs, 1997).

The interviews- tutors

These took place after the first round student interviews so that I could use student responses to help shape the tutor/manager interview schedule Seven beauty therapy tutors were interviewed across the two colleges. The schedules were more structured than those for the students (appendix 8). Although uncovering meanings was an important consideration, I intended to use these interviews primarily to explore specific issues raised in focus groups, student interviews and observations. The schedule covered questions on perceptions of students, 'success' and 'failure' on the course, skills and knowledge, and the nature of beauty therapy as a job. There were also

questions designed to elicit critical views about the curriculum and beauty industry. Several tutors expressed concern about talking too openly about institutional issues. I emphasized the anonymity of participants and colleges and made it clear that they were under no obligation to talk about these or any other issues and that they could withdraw their accounts at any time (see appendix 5).

The main problem with the tutor interview schedule was that it was too long and in several cases, not all the questions were covered. Some tutors were particularly keen to talk about specific topics, particularly in relation to institutional pressures. I had not anticipated this, partly because I had not been able to pilot the tutor interview schedules because no tutors were available for interviews during the pilot stage. Nevertheless, as May (2001) suggests, the possibility that participants might raise issues which appear to diverge from the intended topic is a potential strength rather than a limitation when the intention is to uncover meanings of significance to participants in relation to complex areas of social experience. These interviews generated some rich data which allowed me to understand the kinds of classed and gendered discourses underpinning beauty therapy courses and the ways in which these are shaped in the intersections between the 'fields' of further education and the beauty therapy industry, and the dispositions of tutors and students.

Informal meetings

I classify all contact with participants outside of the formal data collection methods as 'informal meetings'. These took place in a number of ways including having lunch or coffee with students, talking in corridors and attending tutor meetings. In the main, these events were recorded in my field notes as soon as possible after these meetings, although where the occurred between interviews or observations where time was limited my notes were sometimes sketchy.

Participation and Reciprocity

In wanting to address inequality in the research process and produce knowledge which is relevant to those whose lives are being studied, some feminists have advocated bringing participants into research in a direct and collaborative way. For instance, they have suggested participation in research design or asking participants to comment on transcripts or be involved directly in analysis and interpretation (Reinharz, 1992). My research could not be described as participatory in any of these senses. However, participation in research is not necessarily empowering or helpful for participants (Kelly et al, 1994). For a start, for participants to play active roles in design or analysis would have required me to be more explicit about my political/theoretical position and research aims than I actually was. If this had not deterred participation from the outset, which seems likely given the non- or even anti-feminist context of beauty courses, it would certainly have meant students engaging with ideas and concepts antagonistic to the values and assumptions underpinning their 'choice' of training. Whilst it was sometimes tempting to imagine that a more participatory approach might have encouraged students to reconsider their options, the stark reality was that for many of them there were few alternative training options and limited financial resources to make alternative and potentially 'risky' choices even if they had wanted to. Imagining that a 'consciousness raising', participatory approach would have been an 'empowering' experience for the students (or staff) would have been naive given the absence of "corresponding channels for action" (Maynard, 1994:17). In addition, asking students and staff to be involved in methodological work, even commenting on my transcriptions of their accounts, would have been impractical given their commitments and workloads and would arguably, in the case of analysis and interpretation at least, have masked my power and responsibility as a researcher (Kelly et al, 1994:37) and my privileged position with regard to time, and "academic and experiential" resources (Letherby, 2003: 77; Millan,1997). It would also have been a tokenistic gesture given that I intended a feminist interpretation and would not have been prepared to compromise this.

One of the characteristics often associated with feminist research is the existence of reciprocity between researcher and researched (Skeggs,1994,1997; Holland et al,

1998). As I discuss above, the type of reciprocity in which participants are involved in the research as 'partners' is not a feature of this study. The participants gave their time and often very personal, sometimes painful, information about their lives. In comparison, what I chose, or was able, to give back made the exchange extremely one-sided. However, there were a number of ways in which I tried to reciprocate. Firstly, whilst I used semi-structured interview schedules with the aim of ensuring that key questions were addressed, I also allowed students to raise issues of importance to them. In several cases, these dominated the interview but I decided that allowing them to identify and speak about issues of importance to them, even if this meant not covering all the topics on the interview schedule, should be a priority and would give me data about issues I had not thought about. For the students, being able to talk about their lives and feeling that what they had to say was important and interesting is arguably valuable in itself and challenges that idea that research participants are simply objects of study (Skeggs, 1994). However, as I have argued, there are important caveats here with regard to the politics of speech and silence.

I had prepared for student interviews by researching sources of information and support to offer to participants should they indicate a need for this. This included information on educational and career pathways and here my own background in further education was occasionally a useful resource. I was able to suggest possible options for two students who had thought about higher education but had little idea of how to access it. In these cases, I was careful to stress that the potential difficulties, including the financial costs, involved.

An obvious aspect of reciprocity is the feedback given to participants at the end of the research. At the time of writing I have not yet contacted the colleges to arrange this. The dilemma facing me is what kind of feedback to give and how to tread the difficult path between offering feedback that is relevant to them and revealing aspects of the findings which could be seen as personally undermining (see for example, my discussion of tutors' approach to teaching anatomy and physiology in chapter ten). Although clearly the thesis will be available to any participant who wants to read it, my intention is to offer

separate feedback to students and staff. For students, this is likely to be a summary of key themes regarding their experiences on their course and their reasons for enrolling but I also want to present this in critical terms drawing attention to the possible social and cultural factors shaping these. Feedback to tutors is likely to me more problematic. Throughout the fieldwork they were consistently interested in what I was finding and how it might help them improve curriculum delivery and support to students. Clearly, these issues are not central concerns of the research. However, it will probably be possible draw out implications in relation to these issues. For instance, potentially useful comments could be offered in relation to the teaching of A &P and the assumptions about learners as 'practical' rather than 'academic' (see chapter ten).

The Politics of Access and Consent

Access to participants in both colleges was initially negotiated with heads of department and then with the curriculum managers for hairdressing and beauty courses. Letters outlining the research and requesting participation were sent to heads of department for each college (see appendix 2) who referred me to curriculum managers. In March 2009, I met with staff at each college to explain my aims and negotiate a proposed schedule of pilot interviews with students (carried out between April and June 2009) and later, a schedule for the main fieldwork (carried out between September 2009 and July 2010). Before beginning the pilot research, and again before the research proper, I visited classrooms to meet students, explain my research and ask for volunteers. On my initial classroom visits in September 2009 I explained that participation was voluntary and emphasized issues of confidentiality, anonymity and their right to withdraw from the research. All of the students who took part in the focus groups and interviews had agreed to participate verbally and in writing (see appendix 3 and 4). However, the issue of consent was, as in most research, complicated and problematic and bound up with forms of power (McCarry, 2005; Mason, 2002).

Firstly, because I contacted students through tutors, or by visiting their classrooms when tutors were present, it was not always clear whether their decision to participate

was spontaneous or the outcome of 'encouragement', even small amounts of pressure, from the tutors who were often pleased that students, particularly ones seen as 'disruptive', would be absent from their classrooms for short periods. As Mason points out, it is essential to acknowledge "the persuasive influences which operate on people" (Mason, 2002: 80) and how these are connected to institutionalized process and interests. It may well be that some students found it difficult to refuse and that, consequently, consent was given 'by proxy' through the tutors. This was certainly not my intention, but is arguably one of the dangers inherent in research with young people which relies on gatekeepers who agree to the project before potential participants are consulted (McCarry, 2005). It was also probably the case that some students agreed to take part in order to have time away from teaching sessions, in which case 'consent' was shaped by factors other than an interest in participating in the research.

I made sure that I had explained the research to all potential participants before individuals were asked to participate. However, the issue of informed consent is always a complex one and hinges on questions of how much it is possible to tell participants and how to frame the explanation in ways that are accessible or meaningful. For instance, in Anne Pheonix's (1994) study of young mothers participants were given verbal and written information before interviews, but a follow up study revealed that some had not understood what the research was about or why they had been interviewed. When I met students for the first time I explained the study in what I thought was a reasonably direct way- " I want to find out about why you decided to do beauty therapy and what you think and feel about the course". I also stressed confidentially, explained how all contributions would be anonymous, and invited students to ask questions, which some did. It is, however, a weakness of the research that I did not check the efficacy of this approach by asking them about their understanding, or indeed their experience of the research, at the end of the process.

The explanation given to students, to heads of department and teaching staff, focused on the broad aims and interests of the intended research and omitted any indication of its theoretical and political concerns. Indeed, it made no mention of feminist concerns

regarding beauty practices. Mason (1996:58) argues that there are limits to how much information participants can be given about a research project. This might be particularly relevant for feminist research where the aims and intentions of the researcher may be at odds with the values of participants and where explicit information might deter participation. Millan suggests that one way of addressing the issue of feminist research with participants who may be hostile to feminism is to ask whether all methodological characteristics considered to be feminist necessarily always advance feminist agendas. Given that feminist research does not specify method but rather sets parameters for "a politicized framework for the understanding of knowledge", it may be justifiable to "define feminist research in terms of the values it might uphold rather than the techniques it might use" (Millan, 1997:1). This might well include, in some circumstances, privileging access to data in order to produce feminist knowledge over making the political implications of the research explicit. However, if it is acceptable to undertake research which relies on an element of deception, the importance of protecting confidentiality and anonymity is all the more pressing. As Punch suggests, it may be the case that:

> Some measure of deception is acceptable in some areas where the benefits of knowledge outweigh the harms and where the harms have been minimized by following convention on confidentiality and identity" (Punch, 1986, cited in Holland and Ramazanoglu,1994:142)

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All participants have been given pseudonyms and I have deliberately left out any details about the colleges which could easily identify them. In some cases, I have also deliberately omitted 'sensitive' biographical details about participants for the same reason. Personal details and all transcriptions were kept on one computer with password restricted access. Written details, field notes or other documents which contained personal information were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. Once my analysis and interpretation were completed the recorded interviews and focus

groups were deleted. During meetings with potential participants and again before interviews and focus groups I emphasized that I would be using these procedures. Before each interview or focus group participants were given a written statement (which I read out and explained) outlining the ethics guiding the research, including the need for confidentiality about what was said in the sessions, and their right to withdraw from the research at any time (see appendix 3).

Analysis and interpretation

I wanted an approach that would allow me to pay attention to how the students experienced the social and cultural conditions of their lives within and outside of their courses. I also wanted to reflect on the data as a discursive construction, paying attention to the way in which research subjects drew on wider patterns of discourse to interpret experience and produce meaning (Silverman, 2001). I could not imagine dealing with data from different sources without organizing it into thematic clusters. However, my original attempts at this produced so many themes, sub-themes and sub-sub themes that I was unable to establish an analytical focus. In the end I decided to retain these multi-level clusters for reference and retrieval using NVivo, but to use the themes which most seemed most clearly relevant to the research aims or which suggested interesting departures from my original expectations to begin an analysis of discourse. Appendix 10 shows the identification of one of these themes in an excerpt from an interview transcript. Rather than adopting any single approach, therefore, I ended up borrowing strategically from two analytical traditions- thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis.

Thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) have argued, is a flexible method which can be used within a range of theoretical frameworks and is also broad enough to encompass approaches which draw on discursive traditions. Braun and Clarke refer to ‘thematic DA’ as a range of analytical methods including those which identify discursive themes in data “and: theorize language as constitutive of meaning and meaning as

social" (Ibid, 2006:81). There is very little literature on the use of this method, although Singer and Hunter's thematic discourse analysis of the experience of premature menopause (Singer & Hunter, 1999) indicates something of the way in which it might be used to relate patterns in accounts of experience to wider discursive practices. Whilst they drew on post-structuralist analysis, I have drawn on critical discourse analysis as an approach which begins from "social issues and social problems" (Fairclough, 2001: 229) and which acknowledges the material, as well as the discursive in the construction of social 'reality' (Sunderland, 2006). Within this framework, attention is focused on the interplay between three levels of analysis- the text (the spoken/written account), the discourses which have produced it, and the social and historical context which shape both. Its aim is to reveal the relations of domination and inequality enacted or re-enacted through texts produced in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2001). As such, it is ideally suited to excavating the operation of symbolic violence in discourse.

My strategy was to analyze abstracted quotations, conversations and comments from interviews, focus groups, observation and field notes grouped under themes by first identifying key assumptions, concepts, common threads, differences, contradictions and silences (what is not said) and the ways in which these appeared to articulate with structural power relations and normative discourses (see Mills, 2007). For example, texts grouped under the discursive sub- theme of 'gender differences in job choice' revealed apparent contradictions between participants' use of discourses of equality and rights, and assumptions of (hetero)sexual difference. Identifying such paradoxes, or moments of interdiscursivity (Sunderland, 2006), allowed me both to consider the way in which "contradictions are held together on a daily basis" (Skeggs, 1997:32) and how apparently benign or even emancipatory discourses can obscure the workings of power and act as forms of symbolic violence. However, such interpretations emerged through writing about analytical insights and this was an iterative process which involved moving backwards and forwards between the thematized data, the literature, my theoretical and political framework and the research questions. This process forced a level of reflexivity which made me consider and change my interpretations. For instance, once I had identified expressions of symbolic violence as endemic in

participants' accounts I began to interpret their experiences as if this was the only social force shaping their decisions and identities. This was clearly at odds with my materialist feminist perspective and it came as something of a shock that I was using a critical concept in a way that discounted participants' conscious 'negotiations' with the structural forces shaping their perspectives and trajectories. I was, in effect, using the concept of symbolic violence (wrongly) to impose an epistemic violence on their accounts. I interpret my own lack of reflexivity in this instance as reflecting a fear of the complexity of the data, and a result of an overriding desire to impose order on "the many disparate and contradictory experiences" (Skeggs, 1997:31) reflected in participants accounts. The potential for epistemic violence is also inherent in the process of thematizing data, what Kvale calls the 'butchery' involved in fragmenting "the original live, face-to face conversation" (Kvale, 1996, cited in Holland et al, 1998: 223). I followed the example of Holland et al in returning to original interview and focus group transcripts, and sometimes to the digital recordings, to get a sense of the coherence and contradiction within accounts and to check that I was not wrongly ascribing views to particular participants. I also tried to avoid decontextualizing quotations by using NVivo to code them with a fairly large amount of surrounding text. Nvivo also made it relatively easy to contextualize abstracted data by the age, course level and prior educational qualifications of student participants. Thus I was able to explore differences and similarities between these groupings within and between themes.

In my analysis and interpretation of data I have again followed Holland et al by trying to make explicit three levels of meaning; the language and interpretations of participants, my own interpretations and the theoretical and political commitments shaping them, and the differences between these. I recognize that my interpretation of the data involved situated judgments about the themes worthy of study and about the interpretation of discourse within them. My interpretation is one of many possible interpretations, and it is often at odds with those of participants. I also recognize that other researchers with different political investments and theoretical positions may well have come to different conclusions. Although my feminist interpretation is not necessarily 'truer' than other possible interpretations, I justify it on the grounds that a feminist perspective which

recognizes the interconnectedness of agency and structure offers “a distinct vantage point from which to clarify the…. organization, institutionalization, discourses, experience and sexual politics” (Holland et al, 1998: 19) of NVQ beauty therapy courses.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained how the research questions articulate with existing bodies of work on beauty practices, further education and violence. I have indicted how my study aims to contribute to these areas and the knowledge gaps it is designed to address. My methodological stance is one that stresses the importance of experience and ‘voice’ as basis for understanding the social and material conditions of women’s lives. However, my approach is neither subjectivist nor objectivist. At its centre is the acknowledgement that experience is never transparent and is always an interpretation mediated by discourse and social positioning. This is the case for both the participants in this study and for myself as the researcher. An awareness of the partial and fallible nature of knowledge has informed my approach to collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data from interviews, focus groups, observations and informal discussions. Nevertheless, the research attempts to uncover systematic patterns in the data which relate to objective structural inequalities, particularly in terms of gender, (hetero)sexuality and class. The constant reflexivity entailed in situating the research in these epistemological tensions, and the desire for interpretative rigour and clarity which this has inspired has led to what I think is a convincing account of the issues. In this sense I claim a validity for the research. I recognize that this judgment is partly contingent on my political and theoretical position and that other interpretations of the data could have been made. However, I also reject the relativism implied in the idea that research is only ever valid on its own terms. What I have aimed to produce is materialist feminist knowledge based on the contention that women’s experiences of gendered and classed practices and power relations are not simply relative and that an account based on this premise has more explanatory power than one that sidelines or ignores the operation of power at

micro-levels. This is not to discount the weakness of the research. Whilst this chapter has pointed to one example of my failure to listen to what participants were saying because of my eagerness to impose theoretical coherence on their accounts, the reader will no doubt identify other omissions and un- theorized biases in my analysis. There were also themes and issues which 'emerged' from the data but which I have not included in this thesis. Their omission was based on judgments about what would fit or not fit into the overall structure and narrative, or on what appeared relevant and important at the time. The analyses discussed in the following chapters are products of the complex factors discussed here. However, I have tried to present them in a way that foregrounds both the voices of participants and my own situated interpretations.

Chapter Seven

Becoming a Beauty Girl: 'Choice' and Constraint in Post-16 Decision Making

This chapter explores participants' accounts of their decisions to enroll on a beauty therapy course. It addresses the complex matrix of social, cultural and dispositional factors which have shaped that decision. On the one hand, the chapter is concerned with the idea that 'choice', rather than being a precondition of 'liberatory agency' as is suggested by individualization theorists (Adams, 2003), is one mechanism through which gender and class differentiation is reproduced in education (Hatcher, 1998; Jonsson,1999) and more generally in the construction of subjectivities and social relations . On the other hand, Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, in which habitus is a central concept, has been criticized for being 'incomplete' in its refusal to acknowledge some sort of rationality as an element of 'self-selection' (Hatcher, 1998).

There are, of course, problems with the idea that when young women exercise 'choice' they are inevitably engaged in reinforcing their own inequality. This is one of the issues at the heart of debates about beauty culture with theorists such as Davis (1995) and Gimlin (2002) suggesting that in emphasizing oppression over agency feminists have treated women as 'cultural dupes'. Whilst I want to avoid denying the agency of participants, I also want to avoid imposing a voluntaristic notion of agency on their accounts. I agree with Modleski's that insofar as we "exist inside ideology…we are all victims…of political and cultural domination" (Modleski, 1991:45), a position that resonates with Bourdieu's understanding of agency as an expression of habitus which tends towards conformity to the terms of the dominant social order and which operates through a 'feel for the game' rather than through "the conscious positing of ends" (Bourdieu,1990 cited in Hatcher, 1998:18).

The ‘rational subject’ has been criticized as a deeply gendered and classed concept (Skeggs, 2004a; Adkins, 2002). In addition, parallels have been drawn between the traditional enlightenment ‘rational actor’, reflected in rational action theories, and the post-traditional ‘reflexive self’ promoted by the individualization thesis (Adams, 2003). Both versions posit an entrepreneurial, knowledgeable and calculating subject, assessing its own potential and making strategic decisions in pursuit of economic or social goals (Hatcher, 1998; Skeggs, 2004a). In addition, both conceal the gender, class and race privilege underpinning such subjectivity (Adkins, 2002), and both are based on an illusory subject detached from or counterposed to culture and social structure (Adams, 2003; Hatcher, 1998).

Nevertheless, Hatcher suggests that the concept of ‘rational choice’ can be useful once it is released from the “exclusionary definition” imposed by economistic rational action theories (Ibid:16) and understood in terms of the social and cultural contexts of individuals’ lives and as one aspect in the complexity of social action in relation to educational decision-making (Hodkinson, 1998). Thus various types of rationality, as outlined in chapter two, can be seen as possible elements in shaping ‘choice’. In many cases, the participants’ accounts suggest that there is some sort of ‘rational’ basis for the decision to enroll on a beauty therapy course, but often in ways that stretch the concept of rationality well beyond the limits imposed by rational action theories. However, even when rationality is released from rigid instrumentalism, it can still imply a “centered subject…overseeing a purposeful future trajectory” (Adams, 2003:224) and this risks dislocating the subject from the cultural and historical contexts in which different forms of rationality and reflexivity are discursively produced (ibid, 2003). It is therefore important to ask how far the ‘rationality’ suggested in the accounts is a product of contemporary neo-liberal discourses of individualism and ‘choice’ which encourage young people to position themselves as autonomous and self –determining subjects and to ignore the gendered and classed constraints on their post-16 decisions (Brennen & Nilsen, 2005; Rich, 2005; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). It is also possible, particularly because the accounts are retrospective, that some participants may have responded to

the assumed demands of the interview situation for a coherent narrative based on cultural expectations of rational and reflexive behavior.

One of the key elements of the decision for most participants is an attachment to beauty practices and in this respect their 'choice' of beauty therapy is bound up with questions about what shapes women's affective relationships to beauty. As discussed in chapter three, much of the materialist and radical feminist thinking on beauty has been based on the idea that this is at least partly a 'rational' response to the demands of a heteropatriarchal society in which conformity to historically specific standards of beauty "can be essential to a woman's chances for power, respect and attention" (Chapkis,1986:14) . In this sense, the 'choice' to engage in beauty practices may be in the immediate interests of individual women. It is clearly a 'choice' made under conditions of constraint and one which reproduces the dominant gender order, but women also internalize ideologies of feminine beauty so that it becomes a central aspect of identity (Bartky,1990) or in Bourdieusian terms, a disposition of the feminine habitus. So whilst it might be 'rational' to want to produce a feminine appearance, conscious decision making might not necessarily be the only or main driver.

Understanding women's relationship to beauty practices, as well as the more specific question addressed in this chapter therefore requires attention to 'rationality' and reflexive individualism in terms of the actual practices reported in the narratives and in terms of the discourses drawn on, as well as to mechanisms of cultural reproduction. I proceed on the basis that women exercise agency and that part of this includes conscious calculations which are made within conditions of constraint. These constraints are not just repressive but also productive in the construction of gendered and classed subjects. I therefore use the notion of habitus as a mediating concept between agency and structure to explore how gendered and classed dispositions, together with discourses of rationality and individual autonomy, might guide participants towards their 'choice'.

I begin with a brief discussion of the post-16 vocational training and education options offered by the two colleges in order to indicate something of the institutional context in which participants made their decisions. I also outline some of the patterns in the options students had considered. I then move on to explore participants' accounts of why they enrolled on their courses. This section focuses firstly on participants who see themselves as having made a positive choice to enroll on a beauty therapy course. Secondly, I consider the way in which some frame their decision through narratives of indecision, drift and external constraints. Lastly, I explore the extent to which decisions are informed by participants' feelings about themselves and their appearance. Throughout this section I draw attention to the ways in which participants employed different types of rationality in making their 'choices', at least as they are presented in their accounts, and to the ways in which discourses of individualism and choice are mobilized to account for or legitimize decisions. Finally, I consider the implications of participants' use of individual choice discourses in terms of the way they obscure and reproduce systematic structural inequalities of gender and class.

Post 16 Options

The decision to enroll on a beauty therapy course must be understood against the backdrop of post-16 selection and filtering mechanisms and the paucity of options available to young women who leave school with few or no qualifications (see figure 1, chapter six). The only pathways available to most students were low level vocational ones. To greater or lesser extents, most students had considered other options which they may have been eligible for, although these generally fell within a narrow range of vocational courses in which girls traditionally outnumber boys. Childcare or health and social care were the most 'popular' options and had been considered by nearly half of the research group. As feminist studies have shown, the post-16 transitions of working class girls very often involve entry to training and jobs involving the care of others and this usually means low paid and low status work (Colley, 2002;2006). In addition, the

filtering process for these begins long before formal selection for courses or jobs in the predispositions produced in the context of family and early socialization. (Colley, 2003; Bloomer et al, 2002, Skeggs, 1997). Many students talked about caring for younger siblings or other family members and several had mothers who either worked outside the home in the care sector or who were child minders. Their 'choice' of beauty therapy might signal a desire to escape the limited options available to their mothers and a life organized around the care of others. For example, Chelsea, whose foster carer mother had wanted her to do a childcare course, decided on beauty therapy because;

> …there's more to it. And….if I did Childcare I would end up being like a Foster Carer or something but I could see myself more in a beauty salon (Chelsea, Level 2, College A).

For students like Chelsea, the beauty salon seemed to represent a glamorous alternative to caring work. This is in part because students often saw beauty therapy in terms of self production and had little idea of the emotional, caring labour involved. Arguably, both forms of labour require workers to adopt the 'quasi-therapeutic role' associated with domestic femininity and the care of children and men in the family (Bourdieu, 2001:77; Reay, 2004:59). However, It is possible that for some students the choice between care work and beauty is one between different versions of femininity: one associated with traditional feminine roles in the domestic sphere, and one that centers on the body and 'care of the self' in the sense of producing a self more in line with contemporary, body-centered definitions of young womanhood (McRobbie, 2009, Frost, 2001). If rejecting conventional care work represents a resistance to domesticated femininity, it is arguably one contained by the temporally shifting terms of gender, or in Skeggs' terms, by the transmogrifications produced by gender as a form of symbolic violence (Skeggs, 2004a: 25).

A number of participants had considered hairdressing but had seen beauty therapy as more closely related to skills they already had and therefore as an option with fewer risks attached- something at which they were less likely to fail (Skeggs, 1997). Other

options mentioned, and which were available to 'low-achieving' students, were small animal care, catering/hospitality, dance , and outdoor leisure (usually delivered in the context of travel and tourism). Three students said they had considered entering traditionally male areas; the army, mechanics/engineering, plastering, and painting and decorating (delivered under the rubric of construction trades at both colleges). One student was put off doing catering because of the large number of boys on the course. The reasons why such options were not taken up is discussed in more depth in chapter ten. Other pathways offered at both colleges from level 1 included environmental/land-based programmes and sport, though none of the students mentioned these. One college B student was interested in art and design. Although programmes at this college were offered at level 1 upwards, her low GCSE grades meant she was not eligible for the Level 3 specialist fashion and photography pathways she had wanted.

A significant element of the filtering process is the provision of advice and guidance in schools and through the Connexions service (see chapter two) which operated in regional partnerships in the areas of both colleges. Most students' accounts suggest that they received very limited input from teachers and that this mainly involved 'looking through' FE college prospectus and other materials (possibly produced by Connexions) and selecting and then applying for the courses they 'found interesting'. It was unclear how far Connexions was involved in their decision making, though some students said that advisors had visited their classes to tell them about what was available locally and how to apply. Only one student received one-to-one help after she had self-excluded from school, and this was only because of a chance meeting with a Connexions advisor. It appears that none of the students received on-going 'holistic' support with thinking about their futures (Hoggarth et al, 2004) and that the information and 'advice' they received simply guided them towards 'choices' based on already established dispositions. Thinly spread resources and inadequate cooperation between services and schools (Ibid, 2004) may have shaped their experiences. However, improvements in services in these respects cannot, in themselves, address the 'objective limits' curtailing young people's options. In addition, as Colley argues, careers advice provision as it is currently delivered does not provide girls with the opportunities to

understand “why they desire the destinies they pursue” (Colley, 2006: 27) and is therefore unable to address the ‘subjective limits’ which typically guide them to gendered and classed pathways.

‘Choice’, Constraint and Drift

Whilst all but one of the students said they routinely engaged in and enjoyed beauty practices before they started the course, the extent to which they saw themselves as making a positive decision to pursue these interests as a training and vocational option varied considerably. A significant minority of participants framed their decision as a more or less ‘positive choice’ made on the basis of an interest in appearance and, sometimes, holistic therapy practices and a desire to develop their beauty skills and pursue a beauty related career. Others framed their decision as a default position in the absence of other attainable options or refer to external constraints as influencing their decisions. However, this division is not intended to downplay the ambivalence in many of the accounts which confounds any easy categorization. Participants might mobilize an individualized discourse of choice alongside a narrative about severely limited post-16 options, or alongside an account which suggests a gradual erosion of self-worth and bodily confidence through bullying or the requirement to conform an impossibly idealized feminine appearance. However, few of the participants seemed immune to the idea that decisions about education and work are, or should be, a matter of free choice and independent life-planning. The ‘should’ is important here since only a minority of participants felt able to plan their lives and futures in the way demanded by the social and cultural processes of individualization (Ball et al, 2000) and yet not being able to plan a life trajectory was often a cause of considerable anxiety and a sense of inadequacy.

“Everything I do is what I choose”: beauty therapy as a positive ‘choice’.

Both Emma and Abigail are untypical of the group as a whole in that they had previously embarked on or gained, in Abigail’s case, Level 3 qualifications. Their

accounts suggest more positive 'learner identities' (Ball et al, 2000:147) than most other students and much more reflexive 'choice biographies' (Du Bois Raymond, 1998) based on research into training and employment opportunities and an assessment of their own skills and dispositions. Moreover, they talk about their decisions in terms of expected utility of their 'choice' as an investment in themselves and their future life chances.

> Yeah, definitely, definitely. I want to… leave college and do a bit of mobile work, and…working in a salon and then over the years get my degree and own my own place (Emma, Level 2, College B).

> I'm going to do Level 3…[and] … in about ten years time I ….see myself having my own shop. Because also I've done administration and business so I know… how to do things like that… So I do see myself… being successful... A beauty girl (Abigail, Level 2, College A)

Whilst these narratives are suggestive of the instrumental rationality proposed by rational action theories, their decisions had also been informed by emotional responses to previous experiences; of being extremely unhappy as an A level student, in Emma's case, and of an unhappy experience of working as a legal secretary, in Abigail's case. That their decisions have been shaped as much by affective factors as by cognitive ones is also suggested in the way in which an emotional attachment to beauty practices is invoked as a defining feature of their identities and as the basis of a dispositional fit with beauty therapy.

> Beauty was something that I've always done….like, I always knew about it because I enjoyed knowing about it, it's just something that I, I really like. Um, but I was never really encouraged to do it over A levels. (Emma, Level 2, College B)

> I'd always loved doing makeup on people….and my friend just suggested to me…why don't you just go to college and do….So I think that's why I decided to do it (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

Although both young women appear to have had a relatively broad range of options open to them, their decision to do beauty therapy is based on known, familiar and therefore 'safe' territory to which, in comparison to their other options, they have a deeply affective attachment. In this sense, they have made what Hodkinson & Sparkes (1993) call a 'restrictedly pragmatic' decision rather than the kind of utilitarian rational decision predicted by sociological rational choice theories in which safeguarding against economic or social downward mobility would be the defining feature (Hatcher, 1998). Indeed, in retreating from the 'higher status' options available to them in order do something they 'love', both young women are arguably at risk of downward mobility.

One way of understanding how an affective attachment to beauty practices might undermine other options is suggested by Probyn's (2004) reading of the idea of emotion in Bourdieu's work. Whilst habitus works to tailor aspirations to the 'objective realities' of an agent's situation, emotions might work to reduce or amplify the tendencies of her habitus in ways that shape aspirations and perceptions of 'objective limits' (Bourdieu, 1984). Whilst both Emma and Abigail had other options, their accounts suggest that they judged beauty therapy, regardless of its associations with low status and pay, as the most authentic expression of self in comparison with other possibilities.

In both accounts there is an emphasis on self-production and individual choice. Both participants saw themselves as having resisted external pressures in order to do beauty therapy- in Emma's case, the pressure of her father's expectations that she should complete her A Levels and go to university, and in Abigail's, pressure from her mother and friends not to give up the financial security and status of her legal secretary job. It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which this sense of struggle might have reinforced their individualized identities and sense that they are making unconstrained choices. Abigail's narrative most strongly suggests this possibility.

> … everything I do is what I choose.. My mum wasn't happy with it..and she was like, …you can't give up a good job just to go back to college". And there was quite a lot of people that were like that...but once… I've got something in my mind then I've gotta do it… I'm happy… I've done this now because I could still be sat in my job being really unhappy in what I was doing.

Both young women have exercised agency in refusing, in their terms, to be subjugated to the wills of others in their immediate networks and have used the resources at their disposal to do what makes them 'happy'. And yet in following their predispositions to feminine appearance practices they have reproduced the terms of their own gendered domination whilst experiencing themselves as authors of their own destinies.

Other participants also talk about their decision in terms of authentic choice to do beauty therapy. Their accounts, however, suggest much less confident 'learner identities' and more limited cultural capital and 'horizons for action', (Hodkinson,1997). Louisa, Anna, Chelsea, Jenna, Leila and Natalie all initially entered level 1 beauty courses from school without full level 2 qualifications (5 GCES grades A* - C). Although their post-16 education options were severely limited, none of the girls foreground this as a reason for choosing beauty therapy. Instead, they respond to questions about why they enrolled on their beauty course by focusing primarily on their interest in beauty related practices and identities bound up, to greater or lesser extents, with 'girly' activities connected to appearance.

Anna's account, for instance, does not suggest the kind of secure vocational identification (Bloomer et al, 2002) or developed 'choice biography' displayed by Emma and Abigail. Although her only ambition in year 11 was to enroll on a beauty therapy course, her stated reasons for this are vague and connected to a concern with her own appearance and to helping others 'improve' theirs.

What was it that interested you about beauty?

I don't know. I just like going out to get my hair done. I like making people feel good about themselves…making them feel confident and stuff. It's like, nice. (Anna, Level 1, College A).

In this sense, she comes close to the definition of the 'typical' beauty student often used by tutors.

They think 'oh I'm just going to put some make up on someone and do their nails and you know, maybe do a facial ...', it sounds nice, it sounds glamorous. Make people look pretty. (Helen, Tutor, College A).

In contract, Louisa's account suggests that she had considered beauty therapy in more vocational terms. This may be largely because she had some knowledge of what it might be like as a job through her contact with her mother's mobile beauty therapist who had offered to help her with resources to set up her own business. But whilst her decision might be shaped by relationships within family networks and by access to a certain amount of social capital through them, it was also constructed in interaction with broader structural constraints including those associated with the education system, specifically her objective chances of having a range of post-16 options to 'choose' from. Her account suggests that she was unable to pursue her original interests and goals because of poor grades (possibly related to her dyslexia), and it is at this point that we can see the feminine disposition towards beauty practices being used as a fall-back or default position.

Did you think about any other options at school when you were choosing your options?

Photography and art but I wasn't, in art I didn't get on too well... So I probably would have wanted to do, like, fashion or photography but then I chose beauty

> because it's the main thing I do and, like, yeah, spend hours doing the make up! So [laughs]…(Louisa, Level 1, College B).

Louisa's account seems to indicate a resigned withdrawal from the world that she had imagined she might inhabit as a designer or photographer and a sense of loss together with a denial of that loss suggested in the statement, "but then I chose beauty". This is unsurprising given the contemporary burden on individuals to be responsible for their own biographies. To express loss in relation to her original goals would be blame herself for making the 'wrong choices' or for not being in control of her own biography. On one level, Louisa's use of a 'choice' narrative could be understood as a pragmatically rational strategy to protect herself against loss of face. Equally, as Brannen and Nilsen (2005) suggest, the ideological power of individualism to shape perspectives means that the role of external forces in determining opportunities is easily ignored. Looking at this from a Bourdieusian perspective, if habitus makes a 'virtue of necessity' -an "adaptation to and consequently acceptance of the necessary" (Bourdieu,1984 :373)- under any regime of power, then in the context of an individualistic society in which structural constraints become increasingly invisible this action of the habitus may become more effective.

"Just any reason, really": Indecision, drift and constraint

Five of the thirteen participants (Kelly, Amber, Tania, Lindsey and Jaime), all of whom entered their course with few or no qualifications, talked about their decision primarily in terms of beauty therapy as a fall- back position when other options were unobtainable, as something they drifted into because of lack of interest in other possible training options, or because of the perceived need to gain qualifications in order to 'get anywhere' in life. Whilst they all talked about being interested in beauty practices, taking a vocational beauty course was often seen at best as a second choice, at worst, a 'last resort'. In these accounts, the eventual decision to do beauty therapy has what Du Bois-Reymond describes as the "temporary or even arbitrary character" (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998:69) associated with the "undecided" and with what Ball et al

characterize as young people with “narrowly set” horizons for action (Ball et al, 2001:116). However, the accounts of these participants suggest that the ‘choice’ of beauty therapy is possibly less random than Du Bois-Reymond suggests and that ‘durable’ gendered dispositions at least make it a ‘choosable identity’ (Colley et al, 2003). Whilst it is the case that these students ‘lacked’ the purposeful sense of career strategy employed by Emma and Abigail there is a danger, as Ball et al (Ibid, 2001) point out, of pathologizing young people who do not approximate to the idealized subject of a neo-liberal ‘learning society’. This may be a particularly important point in relation to courses which are as thoroughly gendered as beauty therapy. The fact that these young women appear to hold their ‘choice’ at a distance, in some cases representing it as a stop gap or in instrumental terms as a future investment to ‘fall back on’ if needed, suggests the possibility of some resistance to, or distance from, the discourses of beauty culture. Indeed, whilst the “scope and space” or “horizons for action” within which these girls have made their decisions may be limited by the intersections of class and gender, their accounts sometimes (though not always) suggest a more critical understanding of the external pressures within which their ‘choices’ have been made than those of students who are less ambivalent about their decision.

Amber’s account is one of the most fragmented and contradictory and is characterized by a sense of detachment and fatalism. Although she had vaguely considered a number of other vocational training options, her post-16 decision was eventually restricted to a choice between childcare and beauty therapy. In response to a direct question about why she decided to do beauty therapy, she represents her decision as an essentially arbitrary one swayed, in the last instance, by a chance event- a possibly ‘critical moment’ that Amber interprets both in terms of fate and as a moment of agency:

> Just any reason really. My mum wanted me to go to college (laughs) so… it was out of two courses. And, when I looked round this bit and I liked it and I just filled out a application form for Beauty and Child Care, and I rung up on the day

> of the Child Care [open day] and it had been cancelled and I would rather do Beauty..so. That was it (Amber, Level 1, College B).

The experience of making a life decision may feel arbitrary to a young woman whose options have been restricted to the point where any developed sense of volition is no longer possible. As Ball et al argue in response to Giddens' assumption that young people are now able to choose from a 'diversity of options', reflexivity is not a readily available resource for young people leaving school without qualifications (Ball, 2001:22). However, there is also a sense in which Amber's apparent lack of investment in the labour market can be seen as a 'rational' response to limited options available to her and to her experience and expectation of educational 'failure' (Reay & Ball, 1997).

Kelly and Lindsey, both of whom had progressed from NVQ Level 1 to their current level 2 course, also left school with no A-C grade GCSEs. For both participants beauty therapy was a default position when other cherished ambitions or preferred options seemed unattainable. Kelly had planned to become a chef whilst Lindsey had wanted to join the army as a paramedic or to be a painter and decorator. What is of interest here is why beauty therapy was seen as an alternative. There was a very real sense in both accounts that this decision was the fall -out from a process in which disappointment and 'failure' obliged them to look for an alternative and to locate this in activities which they already know and understand. The accounts suggest that beauty practices already played a central part in the way most of the participants produced themselves as feminine before enrolling on their courses. They are also important practices within family or friendship networks. As is suggested in some of the above accounts, the importance of the family as a field of gender reproduction appears to contradict Bourdieu's claim that the domestic sphere is relatively unimportant in this respect (Bourdieu, 2001, Chambers, 2005). As Kelly says, "it's common knowledge about beauty.." and although she is clear that she "didn't even want to be a beauty therapist, I wanted to be a chef", when this dream is no longer feasible (for reasons discussed in chapter ten) she considered beauty therapy as "something to do"

> … when I was thinking about what I wanted to do, I like doing my own nails and things and I used to do my mum's make-up and all that and I used to just think, 'oh I wouldn't mind doing that for a living'. Because…. my cousin, she's … like mentally challenged and I just love doing her nails and stuff and it makes you feel really happy… I just like doing it on my family (Kelly, Level 2, College B)

Lindsey also identified beauty therapy as 'something to do' because;

> I'm always at home doing my nails and they never really go right, so … it's just to give me a bit more knowledge about beauty and obviously if I want to do it in the future…. I'd obviously be qualified in it (Lindsey, Level 2, College B)

In Bourdieu's terms, their decisions can be seen as a 'choice of necessity' determined by limited educational capital and an already established 'practical sense' of 'doing beauty'. However, Lindsey's focus on beauty therapy as an investment for the future suggests a more instrumental and considered approach. Although this may well be a post-hoc rationalization on her part, it seems that her parents may have had an influence on her decision to do 'something' with her life that appears to guarantee some level of security and respectability.

> …they're [parents] … proud of me … for actually doing something with my life, instead of just sitting around and being a bum….they know I don't really particularly want to do it. But, it's something just in case- I've got something to fall back on that I'm going to be qualified in (Lindsey, Level 2, College B).

The prospect of attaining a qualification in beauty therapy allowed her to position herself as respectable, distinguishing herself from the figure of the 'workless benefit claimant' which haunts several of the students' accounts. Like the care students in Skeggs's (1997) study, a qualification, even one that has a limited capacity to inspire and, whether it is recognized or not, limited value as economic or cultural capital, may represent a way of "putting a floor on…economic and cultural circumstances" (Ibid,

1997:58). Although Lindsey's concern with guarding against downward mobility has some resonance with the model of choice proposed by rational action theories, the way in which she imagines the future does not. Her 'plans' to be "in a nice warm country, sat on a beach with a beer in my hand…I'd have my own pub or restaurant behind me on the beachfront", has the quality of "fantasy life of future possibilities" (Ball et al, 2000: 112). Nevertheless, her account suggests a need to position herself as someone who is in control of her life, someone who is engaged, as Giddens (1991) sees it, in a 'project of the self'. Whilst the resources she brings to this 'project' are too limited to construct confidently reflexive choice biography like Abigail and Emma, like them she appears to have a very strong investment in positioning herself within a narrative of personal choice, pushing aside any suggestion that structural inequalities and collective differences have shaped her life chances. It is not just the middle class, as Strathern (1992, cited in Skeggs, 2005: 974) suggests who have 'no choice but to choose' .

> Do you think that being a girl, growing up a girl has had an effect on your life and your choices and… things that you've done?
>
> No, I've made all the right choices I think. There's nothing … I really regret.…if you regret something, you obviously didn't want it to happen at the time (Lindsey, Level 2, College B).

In contrast, a minority of participants focus on the ways in which external constraints of some sort have led them to 'fall back' on beauty therapy. Kelly's account, for example, invokes family conflict and the male dominated nature of the college's catering course as factors which had hampered her ability to realize her goal of becoming a chef. Jaime, meanwhile, was critical of an education system which prevents young people from making 'informed choices' about their futures.

> …when it comes to … doing Beauty and Hair and Childcare it all sounds good, but you don't know what happens in it because you don't do it in your life, so I don't see how you can…properly want to do it … And because you don't

> really know… you just jump in and think, "yeah", you want to do it, because nothing else stands out. Like you've only done it because I don't know what else to do (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

Jaime's refusal to make a 'virtue of necessity' (Bourdieu, 1990) was a result of her critical understanding of how young people are made powerless. However, it may be a measure of the dearth of available discourses which would sustain and develop this insight, as well as the power of the neo-liberal discourse of choice, that she later attributes her situation to a personal failure to exercise responsibility for planning a successful future:

> I should be… planning ahead, but I don't know where to start because I don't know what I want to do (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

In the following narrative, Jaime imagines an alternative future of almost limitless possibilities and upward mobility- if only she had 'got in gear' at school.

> … if I had better grades… I could do….anything I wanted to. I could be a … I don't know – a Judge. Like I could be like something, like, major, whereas now I'm sat doing Level 2…I just feel like if I'd got better GCSEs then I could make more of my life. But then, I've only to blame myself. I could have… got in-gear in school…but I just don't have the willpower that says, "I'll stick with that" (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

Recalling Lehmann's (2009) study of working class university students, when participants recognize external constraints on their post-16 decisions they are often individualized as particular to their own circumstances (as in Kelly's narrative about rebelling against family pressure to 'do well' at school) or as exacerbating difficulties which are, at root, of their own making (as in Jaime's narratives above). Such understandings are arguably produced by symbolic violence working through ideologies promoted by the education system in combination with discourses of neo-liberal

individualization, giving the illusion that positions and rewards are distributed on merit. As Bourdieu argues, "[a]symbolic violence is perpetuated towards the ordinary child creating the irremovable feeling of their own individual failure" (Bourdieu, 1984, cited in Susen & Turner, 2011: 43).

Jaime's account, like those of other participants, also suggests a very keen awareness of the low status of beauty therapy. This may explain some of the ambivalence that even those who see themselves as making a 'free choice' hold towards being 'marked' as a 'beauty girl'.

"I wanted to… take care of myself and everything else": beauty therapy as a solution to 'personal problems'.

Two participants, Jenna and Kelly, explicitly identify dissatisfaction with appearance and low self -worth as one reason for their attraction to beauty therapy. For Kelly, anxiety about appearance is a recurrent theme in her interviews:

> I feel very .. conscious of the way I look…. I used to go to the gym, but I just look around and there's all these like pretty girls and I'm just like, "oh my God… I just can't explain it…..I think that's why I went on this course as well, to like boost my confidence a bit (Kelly, Level 1, College B).

Feelings about appearance are also central in Jenna's account and are bound up with a history of depression, abuse (including childhood sexual abuse), school bullying and family conflict. Her self-loathing is most often expressed in terms of feeling ashamed of her 'looks' and in the positioning of herself as someone whose care for others is either exploited or unreciprocated. Her "ambition for people to recognize me" is intimately bound up with the idea of looking attractive and with a construction of caring as 'sacrificial femininity' (Colley at al, 2003).

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> ….because I grew up with my granddad suffering from arthritis… I had little fingers so I always used to get in between his fingers and snap the little bones …and then he'd be all, "Yeah, that feels lush". And I think it's because, where I'm such a caring person. (Jenna, Level 1, College A)

This appears to be the basis of a rudimentary vocational identification in which caring for others is equated with making them 'feel good' which, in turn, is bound up with making them, and herself, 'look good':

> I enjoy doing a treatment on somebody and then seeing … that they're happy…I want do massage and… I'm doing a beauty course because I wanted to try and make myself beautiful, I wanted to try and feel that I was a bit more prettier and that I could take care of myself and everything else.. because you look at beauticians and you see this perfect… girl, with her eyebrows and her hair up and her makeup looking beautiful (Jenna, 19, NVQ 2, College A).

Several other participants also talked about performing non-appearance –related 'treatments' on family members with health problems as one reason for being interested in the course. The NVQ curriculum, which includes various types of massage and reflexology as well as 'looking treatments' (Black, 2004), reflects the way in which the contemporary beauty therapy industry has incorporated treatments associated with a broad, 'holistic' definition of 'health and wellbeing' rather than just appearance (Ibid, 2004). Arguably, incorporating 'health treatments' under the rubric of beauty therapy reflects and helps to produce a 'body project' (Ibid, 2004; Frost, 2001;2005) and a 'project of the self' in which the distinctions between 'health' and appearance- between feeling good (physically and emotionally) and looking good –are increasingly blurred, drawing women in to a concern with appearance as a signifier of the health and self-management required of neo-liberal subjects (Black, 2004; Giddens, 1991; Ray, 2005).

For prospective beauty therapy students this has a number of possible implications. Firstly, for young women like Jenna, whose attraction to beauty therapy seems to have

had more to do with 'personal' needs rather than vocational identification, beauty therapy may appear to offer a therapeutic solution to 'emotional problems' connected to appearance, identity and relationships. This points to the possibility that for some women in personal service jobs including beauty therapy, emotional labour may not just be a source of 'job satisfaction' through the successful management of clients' wellbeing (Black, 2004) but may also be valued by workers as a means of addressing their own emotional needs or problems. Secondly, whilst (particularly older) middle class women may be more able to invest in salon practices as a 'set of complementary therapies' (Ibid, 2004), young working class women, for whom feminine bodily appearance is arguably a more important, albeit less valuable, resource (Skeggs, 1997), may be more likely to see beauty therapy (as clients and prospective practitioners) in terms of its promises of an attractive appearance which, in itself, represents a solution to other 'problems'. This is certainly suggested in tutors' understandings of why beauty therapy is an attractive proposition for some young women:

> I think it's a lot to do with their own personal image…..we get such young girls who are not always thinking about this as a career. It sounds fun for a start doing make up, and they want to often learn how to look after themselves or make the most of themselves or …..make themselves feel better about themselves (Marina, Tutor, College B).

None of the other students explicitly identify concerns about appearance as a reason for joining the course. However, in many cases dissatisfaction with appearance, sometimes intensely so, is part of the backdrop against which 'choices' are constructed and decisions are made. For instance, Louisa talks about "getting into exercise and beauty stuff" as a way of avoiding bullying at school and to deal with her painfully low self-confidence. For Emma, learning how to 'look after' her skin has alleviated her eczema so she "wouldn't leave this course if someone paid me to". Amber diets and binges to discipline her 'size 10' body because;

I hate how big I am….. there's people on my course who are like tiny and I just want to be like them". (Amber, 19, NVQ 1, College B).

But its significance as a key factor shaping young women's lives may be almost invisible. McRobbie suggests that young women's intense concern with feminine appearance, and the various 'disorders' which may be expressions of this, are now culturally positioned as "healthy signs of unhealthy femininity" (McRobbie, 2009: 96). Whilst for many of the students there is "a hell of a lot of hurt around not being attractive enough" (Hollway, 1984:240), the normalization of feminine identities predicated on dissatisfaction (Frost, 2001) operates as symbolic violence, obscuring not only the harm it causes and its origins in social forces and relationships, but also its role in shaping 'choices' and trajectories. In general, students' accounts support the idea that appearance and physical attractiveness is a 'master status' Whether a woman inhabits an acceptably 'attractive' or an 'unattractive' body it is still, as Tseelon argues, a stigmatized body because it is constantly on display, constantly monitored, constantly in need of work. Female being, as Bourdieu suggests, is often defined and experienced as "being –perceived" (Bourdieu, 2001:63). That 'attractiveness' is always precarious and temporary (Tseelon, 1992:300-301) is something the contemporary beauty industry relies on. As Bartky suggests, it both promises to alleviate feelings of inadequacy or shame arising from stigmatization, at the same time as helping to create them. It seems unlikely that this is irrelevant in the decisions of the young women to enroll on a beauty course, even where it is not explicitly given as a reason. Whilst body-dissatisfaction and the stigma of attractiveness are likely to be as significant for girls who 'choose' other vocational or educational pathways, the lure of beauty makes beauty therapy courses a default position, particularly, though not exclusively, for girls with limited access to educational and career alternatives .

Choice and the disappearance of structure

The tendency of choice discourse to eclipse power so that it can be in effect simultaneously recognized and disavowed in a way that recalls McRobbie's (2009) analysis of the disarticulation of feminism, is also evident in the way in which attraction to beauty practices and vocational beauty therapy is talked about. A number of participants express an awareness of the cultural pressures on girls to conform to normative standards of feminine appearance and in a minority of cases this is understood as being unfair and detrimental to them. However, this critical understanding is never applied explicitly to participants own 'choice' of beauty therapy. As discussed above, even participants for whom a beauty therapy course was most clearly a default position, foreground their strong interest in beauty practices and represent this as a personal preference or natural feminine inclination.

It's just like nails, tanning, make-up – it's, like, what every girl likes; what I like (Jaime, Level 2, College B)

Aside from the powerful influence of the ideology of sexual difference, we can understand this in terms of the difficulty people might experience in comprehending and talking about the social forces which shape life chances and identities (Brennen and Nilsen, 2005). The relative ease with which we conceptualize ourselves as free agents may be partly due to the ways in which social structures in late modernity have "become more obscure as collectivist traditions" (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997 :5). In Bernstein's (2000) terms, the problem is more about an 'implicit model' of the self-regulating, competent subject embedded in the social structures and institutions of late modernity, a model which emphasizes agency and disavows structure. It is difficult for participants, even those who are most ambivalent about their 'choices', to understand their trajectories in terms of structural and cultural constraints when this model obliges them to understand it in individualized or psychologized terms (Walkerdine, 2003; McRobbie, 2004; 2009; Baker, 2009). The Neo-liberal discourse of obligatory self-production refuses to let them off the hook of responsibility for their circumstances.

However, in keeping with other studies of youth transitions (Baker,2005; Ball et al,2000; Brannen and Nilsen, 2005), those most skilled in mobilizing discourses of choice and self -production were those who were able to bring the most educational capital and other resources from family and social networks to their decisions. Of all participants, it is Abigail and Emma who were most able to sustain a narrative of identity (Giddens, 1991) based on 'autonomous choice'. The "capacity to keep a particular narrative going" (Ibid, 1991:54), as Giddens argues, relies on being able to integrate it with 'real' experience and material or symbolic resources. In the case of these two participants this includes the capital derived from educational or, in Abigail's case, occupational background. In Emma's case, it also includes the cultural capital that she is very likely to have derived from her family, or more specifically, from her upwardly mobile father who returned to education when she was a child and is now a head teacher. For others with less resources of this type, the narrative of personal choice is more often interrupted by oblique references to constraints or by a vague account of why beauty therapy was a preferred option and how this could be capitalized on for future employment.

Those participants who are most ambivalent about their decision to enroll on a beauty therapy course are also those least able to sustain a narrative of self as 'autonomous chooser'. Whilst their post-16 decisions are, like those of other participants, "subjected to individualizing logics" (Baker, 2009: 13), their accounts suggest much more fragmented identities and by implication a greater distance from the self-actualizing individualism of neo-liberal discourse. Walkerdine et al, (2001) McRobbie (2009) and Gonick (2007) point to the emotional and psychic costs for young women of 'failing' to live up to the now ubiquitous discourses of the 'successful girl'. A sense of low self-worth pervades many of the accounts and although this cannot be wholly attributed to the experience of being marginalized by these discourses I would argue that they play a significant part in producing the frustration, fatalism, loss, disappointment and self-blame that some participants express in relation to their post-16 decisions. As Brannen & Nilsen (2005) suggest, the rhetoric of choice may worsen the situation of less privileged young people and "create a pessimistic outlook on life" (Ibid: 423) since within

its terms they only have themselves to blame for ‘failure’ to achieve or make the ‘right choices’.

Paradoxically, it may also be implicated in the ambitions held by some of the participants which reflect a fantasy-like “optimism against the odds” (Baker, 2009:6). For instance, Tania and Leila, who entered their courses with few GCSEs and who both struggle with written work , imagined themselves studying, respectively, osteopathy and Spanish at university. Whilst such optimism, as Baker (Ibid, 2009) suggests, allows a ‘better future’ to be imagined, there is no suggestion in their accounts of reflexive, pragmatic planning or of any awareness of progression routes or the barriers they would have deal with in order to achieve these aspirations. However, there is a sense in which this disjuncture between ambitions and ‘objective probabilities’, most clearly expressed by those participants who are most ambivalent about their decision, might signal a germ of resistance to the limits imposed on them. In Bourdieusian terms, where there is a dissonance between the subjective structures of habitus and objective structures, “increased possibilities may arise for critical reflection” (Adkins, 2004:197) or what Bourdieu calls an “awaking of consciousness” (Bourdieu, 1977, cited in ibid, 2004:197). However, insofar as ambitions are consistent with the neoliberal discourse of self improvement (Baker, 2009) any potential for resistance can also be contained within its terms. Self –blame rather than critical awareness appears to be the most likely resolution when participants confront discrepancies between aspirations and their current realities.

I would also suggest that for some of those participants who are less able to sustain a narrative of choice the importance of a heterosexually attractive feminine appearance might fill the vacuum left by the absence of a conventional ‘success biography’. Whilst most participants routinely invoke appearance as a resource that can be capitalized on for success in gaining male and other forms of social approval, it is also sometimes explicitly understood as a form of economic capital. This is expressed most forcefully by Anna for whom particular celebrities are invoked as a model for female success:

> More people care about their looks and doing well I think. Because you see…pictures of celebrities in magazines…. She's [Paris Hilton] done so well for herself. Everyone just thought she just was a dumb blonde, but she's actually really smart. She's made millions out of herself, she's, like, a business woman. I think she's a very good role model on girls (Anna, 17, NVQ 1).

This narrative suggests how the obligation to produce a success-biography, coupled with the sexualization of female success promoted through 'celebrity culture', and more broadly through the processes of female individualization, might work as a form of symbolic violence against young women, particularly those with limited access to cultural and economic capital. The idea of the objectified body as a lucrative resource, as a form of 'erotic capital' (Hakim, 2010), not only normalizes the objectification and commodification of women but also promotes the belief that with effort any young women can be successful. It is unlikely that Anna is unaware of Paris Hilton's extremely privileged background but in this identificatory fantasy it is either ignored or not seen as relevant.

Conclusion: choice, dispositions and the reproduction of inequality

The ability to produce a choice biography, together with access to the resources underpinning it, might well give relatively privileged participants the best chance of capitalizing on their beauty therapy courses through subsequent training/education and entrepreneurialism. However, this does not mean that their 'choices' are any less problematic than those of other participants. As Brennen & Nilsen argue, on the basis of their own and others' research:

> There is ample indication that the positive rhetoric of choice has more appeal to, and relevance for, young people whose social background and education provide the resources necessary to think they are creators of their own destinies without help or hindrance from others" (Brennen & Nilson, 2005:423)

In this sense, reflexive individualism may be as much about an ability to construct a discourse of rational choice as it is a reflection of any 'real control of a life-trajectory (Kidd, 1998). However, whether enrolling on a beauty therapy course has involved some level of reflexive decision making or is the result of few realistic alternatives, it also relies, in the vast majority of cases, on already established feminine dispositions towards self-presentation (Bourdieu, 2001). These are produced through prior experiences of beauty practices which are entangled in pleasure, bodily dissatisfaction and shame and it is arguably these complex affective relationships which determine the centrality of appearance in participants' lives as an internalized master status and which makes beauty therapy a 'choosable identity'. Insofar as participants have 'chosen' to do beauty, it is a choice that is not only heavily constrained by gender in interaction with class but is also one that reproduces these power relations. This position supports Bourdieu's understanding of 'choice' as the mastery of practices which "reproduce.. original objective conditions" (Harker et al, 1990). However, the idea that individuals simply "follow the leanings of their habitus" (Bourdieu, 2010:220) is clearly not the whole story. Some students are aware of external forces involved in their decision making. In addition, they were sometimes critical of the inequity involved in the cultural pressures on girls to conform to particular ideals of feminine appearance. However, that they did not apply this to their own 'choices' may suggest both the power of habitus and the lack of opportunity to ask critical questions about how their 'choices' are shaped by social and cultural forces. Arguably, girls are deprived of this possibility partly because of the preeminence of individualized choice discourses which interrupt whatever critical understanding they have and effectively reassert doxic assumptions (Moi, 1990) about 'what girls like'. Alongside this particular expression of symbolic violence, however, we should consider Colley's (2006) argument about the 'rationality' in girls' training and career decisions. Just as girls might "resist male dominated occupations because of the discrimination and harassment they may face" (Colley, 2006: 27), the centrality of the body and appearance as emblematic of female self-possession (Attwood, 2005), success and upward mobility (Walkerdine, 2003; McRobbie, 2004;2009), together with a severely limited range of other options, provide the objective conditions in which

enrolling on a beauty course can be seen as a 'rational' decision to capitalize on gendered dispositions or, perhaps, to limit any further depreciation of status and self-value (Skeggs, 1997). However, the capital to be gained from embodied femininity in relation to appearance and vocational beauty therapy is a limited capital which also reproduces structural inequalities and reinforces the positioning of women as objects of exchange and the male gaze. In addition, some students entered their courses with a desire to 'help other people feel better about themselves' or, from experience with family members or friends, at least felt a connection between the caring self and beauty therapy practices. It is possibly significant that nearly half of the participants had considered but rejected childcare or other traditional forms of care work. This may be indicative of the continuities and tensions between the expressions of femininity required in care work and beauty therapy, and the tensions between 'care of the self' and 'care of others'.

In the next chapter, I explore some of these issues in the context of tutors' understandings of what makes a successful 'beauty girl' and the value of beauty therapy courses in shaping students' futures.

Chapter Eight
'Good' and 'Bad' Students: Hidden Curricula and Discourses of Success and Failure

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on tutors' notions of what constitutes 'successful' or 'deficient' students and the gendered, classed and racialized meanings that adhere in these constructions. I discuss how these notions are mobilized in the process of recruitment, in the placement of students at different levels within the beauty programmes, and in tutors' understandings of the kinds of skills, knowledge and dispositions which are necessary for successful progression to jobs in the beauty industry. The chapter addresses how tutors' representations of students and their attempts to position themselves as gatekeepers for the industry are informed by their own concerns with defending beauty therapy as a 'serious' and 'professional' occupation in the face of its generally low public esteem and its denigratory associations with 'vanity' and 'feminine superficiality'. However, whilst tutors emphasize the theoretical knowledge and technical skills involved in beauty therapy their accounts also reveal the ways in which success or failure on the course is defined primarily in terms of the gendered and classed dispositions embodied by students. Thus this chapter begins the discussion, continued in chapters nine and ten, of the ways in which the discourses of knowledge, skills and 'professionalism' operate as forms of symbolic violence against both students and tutors, concealing the (hetero)gendered and classed power relations in which beauty therapy is enmeshed. As well as exploring the 'hidden curricula' contained in these discourses, I also address those bound up in tutors' assumptions about the future

job/career prospects and life chances of students; assumptions based on heteronormative and classed notions of women's relationship to the labour market.

"We try to take everybody": tensions in recruitment and selection

In Chapter seven I discussed how beauty therapy was at least a 'choosable identity' (Colley at , 2003) for the participants and one which informs the process of self-selection. However, in order to obtain a place on an NVQ beauty therapy course at colleges A and B applicants must go through a formal processes of attending an interview and an open day at which they are required to participate in a taster session which involves learning to do a treatment such as pedicure. Tutors see this as a way of 'dismantling' applicants' perception of beauty therapy as a 'glamorous' or 'easy' option. It is expected that many of them will find dealing with 'intimate' areas of a stranger's body, including 'bikini lines' and feet, difficult or even 'disgusting' so this exercise is seen as an early induction into the learning culture of the course and the emotional labour which in part defines beauty therapy. This induction acts potentially as an inducement to self-de-selection by applicants deemed 'unsuited' to this work. In theory it is understood as a way of identifying the potential not only to suppress feelings of revulsion but to replace them with feelings which are more empathetic with the needs of clients (Hochschild, 1988).

Assessing 'ability' and 'suitability' against institutional pressures

The surveillance of candidates at this stage serves to distinguish those most and least likely to succeed on the course or to enter the industry. The pressures of funding, management directives and college policies on 'inclusion' mean that very few applicants are rejected:

> …it's not easy to reject really, these days. It's an inclusive college, we try to take… everybody…[and]… to select a few who are more able to cope for

> NVQ2…. we've actually worked quite hard at raising the qualifications required to get onto the [Level 2]course (Sally, Tutor, College B).

In College A, a literacy test taken during the open day is sometimes used as the basis of rejecting candidates whose results show literacy skills below Entry 3 Level on the basis that "they just wouldn't cope" (Karen, College A). Aside from this, an assessment of 'behaviour' and 'attitude' is the main basis on which tutors feel legitimately able to refuse applicants.

> … the only way we are allowed to reject them, is if they have behaviour issues… if they are going to behave badly on that [taster] day you know that….they're not going to be…. acceptable in a learning environment (Marina, College A).

Marina and other tutors focus on how well an applicant's behavior is perceived as likely to fit into and not 'disrupt' a learning environment which, in the training salons, is physically set up to reproduce the 'calm' and 'caring' ambiance of a commercial salon and to suggest the kind of interactions and behaviours expected of actors in this context. In this sense, judgments about appropriate and inappropriate behavior coalesce around shared ideas about the vocational dispositions appropriate for the face-to-face and bodily intimate service work (Black, 2004).

> …there was one girl recently…and she had a face like a smacked backside the whole [taster] day… didn't say one word, didn't smile, didn't comment when I asked her any questions, didn't answer…she just wasn't selling herself. [At] the interview… we explain it's their chance to shine…to prove to us that they're going to be worthy of the course and she just didn't …(Karen, College A).

In spite of the institutional pressures to accept applicants, the importance of tutors' judgments about students' ability to acquire and inhabit an appropriate vocational habitus is demonstrated in decisions about the course level on which individual applicants should be placed. In some cases, there is an apparent discrepancy between

formal entry requirements and the placement of students. Some students with the required number of GCSEs or even a full level 2 qualification were nevertheless placed on level 1 courses. Whilst I was not able to access information on the reasons behind decisions about particular individuals in the research group, it is interesting to speculate about why some students were not placed on courses according to the stated academic criteria.

Chelsea (College A), a level 2 student, was originally placed on the level 1 course in spite of having four grade C GCSE passes including English Language and English Literature. When I met her at the end of her level 1 year and again to interview her at the beginning of her level 2 course it was easy to see how she may have been perceived as particularly shy and 'childlike' in her conduct and relationships with others and how this might signal a significant distance from the 'maturity' and confidence perceived by tutors as necessary for client-centered emotional labour and body work requiring;

> …somebody who's a good chatter, not… loud… but someone that's just interested in people…they do need to have that caring side …because they have to know that some people feel embarrassed coming in…. They also need to have a certain level of maturity which often they don't have (Sally, Tutor, College B).

It may also be significant that Chelsea is one of only two Black (African-Caribbean) or dual heritage students on the Level 2 course at College A. As indicated in chapter five, there is certainly evidence from UK school-based research suggesting that institutional racialization may shape teachers' judgments about pupil ability resulting in the over-representation of Black students in low ability tiers (Philips, 2011). Her apparent 'mis-placement' may also raise questions about how far tutors' judgments about the suitability of applicants for beauty therapy work are shaped by the historical equation of the feminine "art and glamour" of beauty culture (Bordo, 2003; 63; Craig, 2006) with Whiteness. This does not have to imply any consciously racist intent on the part of

tutors but rather suggests that discursive constructions of 'deficient' and 'ideal' applicants might be informed by normative notions of beauty and beauty practices which "locate women in specific valued or devalued positions" (Craig, 2006:164). In this sense, the process through which Chelsea is effectively demoted to a level below her school achievement illustrates how symbolic violence intersects with and reproduces structural inequalities and violence.

The way in which racialized meanings in intersection with gendered and classed ones are mobilized in the selection process is also suggested in Karen's narrative about placing a white applicant 'with potential' but no GCSEs and a low literacy level on a level 2 course.

> ….this year there was a girl…she came up E3 for literacy and…we put her on level two. We knew that she'd struggle so we put her in 2C, which is …my group, with Mavis [Learning Support worker] …but she was a… lovely, lovely girl. Very placid, she's a pretty girl, I mean pretty as in very well made up, she's such a lovely temperament, she's very well mannered, she's smiley, the perfect model student. (Karen, Tutor, College A).

This perception of what makes a 'model student' contains a construction of femininity which resonates strongly with the "pure and proper femininity" (Skeggs, 1997:122) historically ascribed to White, middle class, heterosexual women, a category, as Skeggs points out, "designed to 'other' working class" women as well as Black women and lesbians (Ibid, 1997, 122). Though in both colleges most beauty therapy students are from White, working class backgrounds, this classed and racialized construction of femininity is part of the vocational habitus to which students are required to aspire or at least approximate.

Tacit understandings of what makes an' ideal' or 'deficient' beauty student are also suggested in the case of Alex, who was placed on a Level1 course despite having a full Level 2 qualification in Health and Social Care. Her ambition was to work in holistic

therapies but she was encouraged by teachers to apply for beauty therapy as a route to this kind of employment. Her allocation to a Level 1course not only discounted her previous academic achievement but, at eighteen, had put her at a disadvantage in terms of accessing free 16-19 educational provision. Whilst Alex, as described by her tutor, is “painfully, painfully shy”, she is also seen in other ways as having a habitus at odds with the kind of feminine dispositions normatively associated with beauty therapists.

> She's not really a beauty therapist… I think [it’s] her personal presentation….she doesn’t make the most of herself. She always turns up in trainers and jeans…there isn't anything really that I can put my finger on but she's never looked smart whereas beauty therapists generally are very aware of their own personal presentation (Carol, Tutor, College B).

The fact that Carol feels unable to ‘put her finger’ on exactly what it is about Alex which makes her the ‘wrong’ sort of student underscores the tacit, partly unconscious nature of the heteronormative assumptions which distinguishes those with and without a ‘feel for the game’ of beauty therapy. She is, however, able to point to the embodied dispositions which symbolize the kind of femininity required of beauty students. It seems unlikely that this would not have contributed to the judgments made about her at interview. This may be especially so given the tutors’ expectation that most applicants will already be immersed in rituals of feminine self-presentation.

> ..generally they…look after their appearance…have make up on and their nails done and things like that [laughing]. Not very academic but quite well presented (Sharon, Tutor, College A).

Gate Keeping: defending the 'status' of the beauty therapist

That they are seldom able to reject applicants is a source of concern to all the tutors in the research group. In part this is because of the difficulties of getting students of 'low academic ability' or without the 'appropriate' dispositions, through the course. For some tutors, this is clearly an ethical issue:

> If they wanted to come we had to accept them….I personally think that that's morally wrong (Carol, Tutor, College B).

However, their concern with not being able to reject applicants is also bound up with the fragile status of beauty therapy as a training programme and an occupation. Many of the accounts mirror the concerns of beauty therapists in Black's (2004) study about the desire for 'professional' status in the face of low pay, job insecurity, and discourses which counterpose 'beauty' against 'brains'. These issues are understood to contribute to the positioning of beauty therapy as service work rather than a 'professional' occupation. Like Black's beauty therapists, the tutors are engaged in a struggle for recognition and public esteem. However, in this case the struggle is conducted not in the industry itself but in sites which are vital for the industry and in which future workers are produced. Tutors see themselves as having a central and privileged role in gate-keeping and 'improving' industry 'standards' and status.

> …this is why I got into teaching…. It sounds a bit idealistic but I thought standards seem to be dropping and …it's such a shame, I'd like to get in there and put something back and try and sort of let, raise the standards" (Sally, Tutor, College B).

The idea of 'falling standards' is often discussed in relation to the types of qualifications which are now standard for entry to the industry and to the 'types' of students being recruited to beauty therapy courses. Like the majority of beauty therapists in Black's study, most of the tutors regarded the shift from HNCs/HNDs and City and Guilds Craft

qualifications as a significant part of this perceived decline. Anne, a tutor at College B, contrasted the BTEC National Diploma in Beauty Science (recently disbanded at the college because of its perceived difficulty for 'low achievers' and thus its low retention and success rates) with NVQs:

> I think that the BTEC… is a very good qualification, and it has…particularly high levels. It makes the therapists more informed of the whole body… the NVQ system is almost…. just ticking boxes, to a certain extent (Anne, College B).

The majority of tutors also made comparisons between the NVQ curriculum and the demands of their own training:

> ..we had lots of assignments, lots of assessments and our tests were a lot harder and a lot more scientific…We had to do go into microbiology..pathology, we did lots of chemistry… we did a load more. (Karen, Tutor, College A).

The way in which tutors talk about NVQ beauty therapy as a 'box-ticking' exercise reflects a specifically British model of VET since the mid- 1980s which privileges the "mastery of narrow range of tasks" (Brockman et al, 2008:551) over theoretical knowledge and a general education. For tutors, qualifications which produce workers without the kinds of knowledge that can be pointed to as evidence of beauty therapy as a 'serious' industry exacerbate its already low status. Moreover, if the NVQ system has stripped out of much of the more formal, theoretical or 'scientific' knowledge from the curriculum, as discussed in chapter two, it also exposes its association with the 'beauty' side of the "brains/beauty split against which women are evaluated" (Black & Sharma, 2001:105) as persons, and in this case, as workers:

> Well they're not particularly academic.... The majority of them are what I call girly- girls… I think people still perceive the beauty industry as very girly… not a serious industry….people say "well what do you do now" and I say "a beauty

> therapist" … you can see some people sort of going "oh yeah" (Philippa, Manager/Tutor, College B).

Whilst they are clearly critical of what they see as a 'dumbing down' of the qualification structure, most tutors tend to focus on the perceived deficits of applicants and students as a reason for the introduction of NVQs:

> The girls that apply wouldn't cope with the courses that I did….The NVQs are designed for the ones that can't really… have struggled at school and they're a lot more practical. So yes, they've still got the theory but they've designed it so that… it's a lot easier (Karen, Tutor, College A).

There is a kind of symbolic violence at work here which has the effect of re-framing neo-liberal education policies as a benign response to the 'needs' of 'less able' students. An orientation to 'practical' skills rather than formal knowledge becomes naturalized as an attribute of working class girls rather than an outcome of policies informed by a "largely unspoken assumption that understanding was beyond the capabilities of those likely to take [NVQ] qualifications" (Young, 2011:277). In addition, the naturalized association of practical skills with working class femininity (being a girly-girl) in part define the discursive boundaries within which students are positioned by tutors. Whilst tutors are themselves subject to these gendered and classed discourses, they also distance themselves from them, not only by stressing the relative academic difficulty, and therefore value, of their own training but also, in some cases, by representing applicants and students in extremely denigratory ways. Karen is probably the most outspoken in this respect:

> Probably eighty percent of the students we get are, I'd say, if I was being un-PC, they're the thick ones, quite frankly (Karen, Tutor, College A)

Such statements represent an extreme expression of the deficit model of students which all tutors, to greater or lesser extents, employ. Whilst being victims of the

symbolic violence contained in discourses which position 'brains' against 'beauty' they also enact the same violence against students whose dispositions appear to threaten the 'respectability' of beauty therapy as an occupation and thus their own sense of themselves as skilled or even 'professional' workers.

Success and failure: skills, knowledge and dispositions

Tutors concerns about recruiting 'inappropriate' applicants is strongly related to their anxieties about the institutional pressures to pass 'substandard' work and sign off students for the award of their NVQ qualification. However, several tutors legitimized acting against their professional judgments on the grounds that 'incompetent' students would be unlikely to find work as beauty therapists.

> …there's girls going through that shouldn't be getting a qualification really…we get told…we have to pass them. The only thing that gives me a little bit of peace of mind is often those students that are pushed through don't go to work in industry anyway (Marina, Tutor, College A)

> I think that's why sometimes it doesn't bother me that you have to get them through because I know that they are not going to work in industry (Sharon, Tutor, College A).

Tutors expect a high percentage of those recruited to level 1 or 2 courses and those who progress from level 2 to 3 courses (the standard for qualified entry to the industry) will never be beauty therapists or will leave beauty therapy employment after a short time. Whilst there is a general agreement that many students, at least at levels 1 and 2, have little vocational interest in beauty therapy, tutors also focused on several other factors influencing the low rates of progression to the industry. Some pointed to the possible demand -side effects of recession, particularly on small local salon businesses,

although one tutor appeared to regard the beauty industry as 'recession-proof' and, in spite of the low wages even 'top beauticians' can expect, as lucrative employment:

> It's a booming industry and, so there's a lot of money to be made… and the ones that have got a head on their shoulders know that (Karen, Tutor, College A).

Other external factors alluded to include the hard physical work involved in being 'on your feet all day', and the typically long hours and low pay which may act as a deterrent to entering or staying in the industry. One tutor pointed to the difficulty of 'getting your foot in the door' when recruitment to small salons is done informally through local networks in an industry where 'everyone knows everyone else'. Most tutors also identify a widespread suspicion of NVQs (see chapter two) amongst employers as a key factor in the difficulty student's face in finding work:

> I know people in industry from General Logica and places like that who say that NVQ stands for Not Very Qualified! (Sharon, Tutor, College A).

Those students who do find work, either with small salons or larger spa or cruise companies, are routinely 're-trained' in techniques and the use of specific beauty products. The increased numbers of students looking for work and consequently the heightened competition for beauty therapy jobs was also seen as an issue. Indeed, although the most up to date industry research points to vacancies and skills shortages (HABIA, 2007), the possibility that there are simply not enough jobs for the numbers of beauty therapy students emerging from FE colleges is supported by recent research indicating that for every five students attaining a beauty therapy or hairdressing qualification in England in 2010-2011 there was one job vacancy (Gardiner & Wilson, 2012). According to this survey, the pattern in the South West is the same as that for the whole of England. Nevertheless, tutors' accounts suggest that they perceive low progression rates as being as much a function of the individual dispositions of students

as an outcome of external social and economic factors, and as being as much, if not more, about dispositional factors as technical skills or theoretical knowledge.

There is a general agreement about the kinds of students who are most likely to be 'successful' in the industry. The characteristics identified with such students in part mirror those associated with the future oriented, self-actualizing subjects of neo-liberal discourse, able to take risks, be geographically mobile when local opportunities are in short supply and, in one tutor's words, to "show-case" themselves:

> …if you want it….you go out and get it..and you make yourself available...you've got to be bold enough, brave enough... Because if you can't find anything in the local vicinity, you go…… to where the work is, don't you? (Anne, Tutor, College B)

> … we've got a girl who's the Head Therapist [at a local spa] now, and she only graduated two years ago…she did a placement, she stuck with it….. If this is your dream, what will you do for your dreams? (Marina, Tutor, College A)

At the same time, tutors see 'successful' progression as being dependent on feminine dispositions towards both the care of others and self-presentation. In relation to the former, Carol talks about one of her 'best' students:

> ....she's been offered every job she goes for... you can just tell by looking at her. She's got this calm manner about her. She focuses on her clients. She's tremendous empathy with her client (Carol, Tutor, College B).

However, tutors' perceptions of the source of these dispositions is often at odds with the focus on formally transmitted skills/competences at the heart of the NVQ system as well as with their own concerns about the importance of 'underpinning' knowledge.

.. you've got to have a feel for giving the treatments; you've got to have an empathy with your client and some of these qualities you either have or you don't. Some students can acquire them but quite often it's an innate thing which some people have (Carol, Tutor, College B).

Carol's account resonates with Black's (2004) finding that whilst beauty therapists tend to see 'emotional skills' as central to Beauty therapy they are perceived to derive from a combination of experience and 'personality' rather than from formal training. They are skills women are "supposed to have by virtue of 'having lived their lives as women'" (Davis &Rosser cited in Black, 2004:122) or simply by virtue of 'being women'. From a Bourdieusian perspective, Carol is able to naturalize these 'skills' because, as socially inculcated dispositions, they come to be taken for granted as immanent characteristics. The 'ideal' beauty therapist is understood to be one who is better able to perform these aspects of femininity. 'Successful' students are those who have more thoroughly embodied these dispositions both through 'life experience' prior to the course, something that school leavers are likely to have less of than older students, and through their training. However, in keeping with the often invisible and unacknowledged nature of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), interpersonal skills are only minimally addressed by the formal NVQ curriculum and are better understood as a 'hidden curriculum' (Colley, 2003).

A similar argument can be applied to tutors' perceptions of the importance of self-presentation. However, the assumption of immanent feminine inclinations to 'doing looks' is not, in itself, sufficient for 'success' which requires an ability to present the self as attractive but 'respectable' in a way that specifically disavows dominant notions of working class femininity (Skeggs, 1997). In the following account, the ability to get a job in the beauty industry is understood to require the modification of class and age related dispositions towards self-presentation:

…you've got to look the part….which means that you look professional.. your hair and make-up and your uniform… they [employers] don't like tattoos….So, if

> you've got a visible one… you won't get the job…piercings as well. They won't accept that. And then you get the girls that maybe don't try as hard… [a] bit slovenly in their appearance. Maybe their language is a bit… colourful sometimes…. they are going to be the ones that people hesitate over (Anne, Tutor, College B)

Although tutors talk about the importance of transmitting the skills to perform eye -lash tinting, waxing, make-up and so on this is rarely seen as problematic in the way that getting students to behave 'professionally' or present themselves 'appropriately' is. Sally's account highlights this distinction.

> ……they often grasp the makeup quite well and the painting of the nails. And they're often better at painting nails than I am to be honest because they do it quite a lot on themselves… What we have to assess them on is that they have their correct uniform… their hair up… one pair of earrings only ….. no facial piercings…… and that actually can be, you think, quite simple…… but gosh, what hard work we have to get them to get their hair up, take their facial piercings out… (Sally, Tutor, College B)

What these tutors' narratives about success and failure suggest is that the technical skills which are formally the basis of beauty therapy courses, along with the (now restricted) theoretical knowledge associated with them, are less instrumental in producing workers than the dominant discourses of vocational training would have us believe. It would seem that the rhetoric of skills acquisition conceals the largely dispositional work on emotions and bodies involved in beauty therapy training and, consequently, the gendered and classed nature of this 'hidden curriculum'. In this sense, the discourse of technical skills and qualifications awarded on the basis of these acts as a form of symbolic violence, inculcating a misrecognition on the part of both students and staff of the social power relations in which beauty training is enmeshed.

Colley at al (2003), who arrive at a similar conclusion with regard to childcare, healthcare and engineering courses, argue that the notion of vocational habitus "renders visible aspects of the hidden curriculum of these learning sites, and in particular the role of class and gender in socially reproductive processes" (Ibid, 2003: 17?). Like Colley at al, like other theorists of VET, place an emphasis on excavating the power relations shaping vocational education sites in order to change them into cultures which are able to transform "the aspirations of…students into something less tightly bound by classed and gendered values and stereotypes" (Bloomer et al, 2002). Though these theorists acknowledge "that attempts to change learning cultures in VET may..be difficult to effect" (Colley et al, 2003:18), the assumption is that currently highly gendered vocational areas could be otherwise and, as discussed in chapter two, sometimes do bring about 'positive' dispositional changes. For example training for healthcare , which has been historically constructed through gendered, classed and racialized discourse and policy (Skeggs, 1997) can encourage self-reflection and a broadening of 'horizons for action' by introducing students to social science subjects (Bloomer et al, 2002). This in turn might inspire thinking about how the practice of care could challenge rather than reproduce dominant power relations. But it is far less clear how such transformations could take place in the context of beauty therapy training given that the beauty industry is much more emphatically premised on the production and regulation of femininity. If the misrecognition of power relations is foundational to beauty therapy then revealing the operation of symbolic violence in its discourses and practices would simply invalidate rather than transform the culture of beauty therapy courses.

Tutors imagining students' futures: The longer term meaning of 'success' and 'failure'

Aside from the difficulties of obtaining paid employment in beauty therapy, one of the key themes in tutors' narratives about students' transitions from training to work is the assumption that they will very often have a precarious and interrupted future

relationship to employment. Whilst these assumptions may be well founded given the structural inequalities in the labour market and heterosexual households and the low wages and insecurity of work in the beauty industry, the discourses mobilized by tutors are ones that naturalize these conditions or obscure them by appealing to individual preference. Supposedly outmoded notions of women as secondary earners with a primary commitment to the domestic sphere are reflected in narratives about the trajectories of students who enter employment in beauty therapy:

> They see it more as something that they can possibly do alongside running a family. It's something they can do…either as a mobile or in their own home. And I think they see it as a way of supplementing an income (Phillipa, Tutor and Programme Manager, College B)

> …if they have children they can still do it, part time, flexible, around childcare, the husband comes home and they can go and do a couple of hours of waxing and still get a little bit of money…all you need is a wax pot and a few products and then you're away (Karen, Tutor, College A).

In the above account, Karen represents the acquisition of beauty therapy skills as an anticipatory investment for future motherhood, invoking a traditional breadwinner-homemaker family in which there is a happy 'complementarity' of gendered roles 'allowing' women to do home-based or self-employed work on a 'flexible' basis. 'Flexibility' is seen here as being in women's own best interests rather than as necessity which is both produced by, and may reproduce, gendered and classed power relations (Bradley, 2009)[64]. It is positioned as something which those with "a head on their shoulders" would 'choose'. But as feminist labour market theorists have argued, this functionalist model of the relationship between the private and public spheres obscures

[64] Bradley highlights the conflicting understandings of 'flexibility' in post-Fordist economies and how these reflect the different interests of employers, unions and young workers. She argues that flexibility is a multifaceted concept and is neither 'all bad or all good'. However, her empirical evidence suggests that whilst 'internalized flexibility' (Bradley & Davadsen, 2008) might reflect the immediate interests of young working women with children it also has potentially extremely negative consequences on earnings, working conditions and collective action against exploitation by employers.

the way in which women's unpaid and paid labour is organized through asymmetrical heterogendered relations which devalue and marginalize their paid work (Delphy &Leonard, 1992). The idea that beauty therapy skills are a basis for earning a 'supplementary income' underscores both the economic power relations of the heterosexual household and the limited cultural and economic capital yielded by beauty therapy qualifications and work in the industry. The discourses employed by tutors position students primarily as future "capital assets" for others (Lovell, 2000) –husbands and households- and thus as 'objects of exchange', a position that limits their abilities to maximize even the limited cultural and economic capital that could be extracted from being a beauty therapist.

Even where motherhood and marriage are not specifically mentioned, tutors expect that many students are likely to use their beauty skills to supplement income from other low paid, routine jobs or to make them better workers in those jobs:

> They want to have a little Nissan Micra and sit with their couch in the back and their wax pot in the boot and they want to drive to their clients..… do a half leg wax and then go off to Tesco's to work (Karen, Tutor, College A).

> Quite a few of them end up selling in places like Superdrug… if their interest is makeup then…it's a good idea to have a bit of knowledge about what you're selling (Carol, Tutor, College B).

There is also an expectation that other low paid jobs will simply prove more attractive than beauty therapy because students can earn the same or better wages without the long hours and physically (and possibly emotionally) demanding work associated with beauty therapy:

> …they find out they can get the same amount working at Asda.. and not have to do the…physically demanding work… they could be sitting…on a chair in Asda on the checkout (Marina, Tutor, College A).

The discourse of 'professionalism' with which tutors try to elevate the status of beauty therapy training, together with official rhetoric of skills for employment, is belied by these low expectations and the low objective probability that beauty therapy qualifications by themselves will, for most students, yield success in dominant terms, or even a living wage. Whilst many students see running their own businesses as the pinnacle of success this is, as Karen suggests, an unrealistic expectation for most students:

> You've got to be a special person to manage a business let alone be the sole manager….and…there's not many girls that I see each year that are…cut out, having the right temperament or the right discipline (Karen, Tutor, College A)

Here, Karen individualizes dispositions to entrepreneurialism obscuring the kinds of class based cultural and economic resources that are likely to make success more possible. That girls without such resources are effectively barred from using their qualifications in this way may owe something to the lack of business related training on the NVQ beauty courses65. It seems likely that those students who do end up running their own businesses (as distinct from informal self-employment) are those who already have the confidence, skills and knowledge or the economic and social capitals to pursue this kind of future.

[65] Neither college delivered business training at level 1 or 2 and only very sparse provision was made at level 3.

Conclusion

The accounts of tutors suggests that they are caught up in contradictions between their role as gatekeepers for the beauty therapy industry and their remit as caring educational professionals who want 'the best' for all their students. Resolving the sense of dissonance that this gives rise to often means justifying students' success or failure to become beauty therapists on the grounds of pre-existing or naturalized bodily and emotional dispositions. Not only does this call into question the importance of learned skills and knowledge, and therefore their own desired status as 'professional' beauty therapists, but it also arguably undercuts their status and efficacy as professional educators. In addition, the naturalizing and normalizing discourses they employ in placing students at different levels of the programmes and in their expectations of students' future trajectories obscures their own unwitting roles in reproducing inequalities. This chapter has drawn attention to how these inequalities are reproduced through the operation of symbolic violence. For at least two of the students in the research group, and possibly many more outside it, it is likely that the selection and filtering process, informed by the heterogendered, classed and racialized norms of 'beauty culture', lead to their placement on courses below their school achievement levels and, as a consequence, to the loss of one or two years of their 16-19 entitlement to education. However, one of the most savage forms of institutionalized symbolic violence, disguised by the caring benevolence of most tutors who want 'their girls' to 'succeed' in one form or another, is enacted in the contradiction between official discourses of 'success through skills' and the real value of beauty qualifications for most students. Those who do not make it to full time jobs in salons, spas or cruise ships will have spent two, possibly three years, and most of their post 16 entitlement, working for qualifications that will yield little cultural or economic capital. Furthermore, students' chances of employment are undermined by the mismatch between FE provision and the labour market. Whilst the beauty industry in the UK may have expanded in the last decade, the rapid growth in beauty therapy courses as a response to the perceived needs of employers, together with the possible effects of recession, has meant that even the most 'suitable' candidates will struggle to find the work for which they are

ostensibly qualified. For FE colleges, however, low level vocational courses such as beauty therapy represent the most effective method of 'widening participation' in a way that secures government funding currently based on retention and achievement rates. Whilst government education and training policy in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been oriented to 'bringing in the excluded' (Nickson et al, 2003) it could also be understood, in Bourdieu's terms, as "keeping hold of those it excludes, just relegating them to educational tracks that have lost more or less of whatever value they once had" (Bourdieu, 1999:425). As one tutor suggested, whilst most students may never have a career in the beauty industry, the course teaches them 'skills for life' in and outside of paid work– dispositions which will be as useful to them working behind a checkout in Superdrug as in a beauty salon, and which are expected to shape their futures as 'flexible', part-time workers, wives and mothers.

Tutors construct a discourse which essentially legitimizes beauty therapy courses as training for low wage employment and normative feminine domestic roles. Through this lens, the imperative for young women to stay in education and training at all costs may have more to do with producing particular types of feminine subjects and less to do with challenging social inequality and exclusion. If working class girls with few of no qualifications cannot be 'successful' in normative terms, they can at least be steered away from becoming NEET (see chapter two) and from longer term 'welfare dependency' towards suitably feminine employment and 'respectable' dispositions. In this sense, the 'success through skills' discourse also operates as symbolic violence in that it obscures the centrality of the gendered and classed vocational habitus which tutors aim to instill in students but which is hidden beneath discourses of skills and knowledge. The next chapter explores this further through students' experiences of the disciplinary regimes on their courses and how these target their bodily and emotional presentation in order to produce 'appropriate' dispositions for beauty therapy work.

Chapter Nine

Learning to Labour in the College Beauty Salon: Grooming the beauty therapist

Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand how the gendered and classed dispositions of participant students are reinforced, modified or changed by their experiences of beauty therapy courses. It is concerned with the processes through which students come to acquire, or attempt to resist, the vocational habitus of a beauty therapist and the meanings that are attributed to this by students and tutors. As discussed in chapter four, Bourdieu's understanding of how agents develop a 'feel for the game' through "embodied engagement with practice" (Hodkinson et al, 2007a: 417) necessitates, on some level, a misrecognition of the power relations which constitute and define it (Webb et al, 2002). On this model, the appropriate habitus for a beauty therapist, one that makes her "the right person for the job" (Colley et al, 2006), can only be successfully produced if the social-cultural conditions of its production remain largely hidden or unacknowledged by participants, both students and their tutors. As discussed in the preceding chapters, these misrecognitions are maintained through the operation of symbolic violence as a "process of social reproduction" (McRobbie, 2004: 103). The ways in which this is enacted through the requirements of the curriculum and tutors' understandings of employer demands, and in the interactions between students and between students and tutors are central concerns of this chapter. I also address the ways in which misrecognitions operate through a series of dualisms: between 'care of the self' and 'care of others', between 'looking good' and 'feeling good', between the notions of 'natural' and 'fake' beauty, and between 'professional' and lay beauty practices. However, this chapter also sets out to identify instances which might

represent a ‘break with doxa’, or suggest a lack of fit between students’ dispositions and the normative assumptions embedded in the beauty therapy courses, or in which the operation of symbolic violence is interrupted or challenged. My concern here is to explore the extent to which the ‘field’ of beauty therapy training opens up or closes down possibilities for critical awareness of power relations.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first focuses on how students are ‘groomed’ to service the emotional and aesthetic needs of clients and the ways in which students negotiate the demands placed on them by this training. The second part addresses the connected issue of aesthetic labour and how students’ bodily dispositions are disciplined to conform to an idealized notion of what a beauty therapist should look like. However, in the context of beauty therapy, ‘producing the look’ also involves training students as surveillants of other women on the basis of heteronormative, classed and racialized notions of ‘attractiveness’. Throughout the chapter I refer to various elements of formal curriculum which is similar at both colleges. Appendix 1 outlines the main content of the courses at NVQ Level 1 and 2.

Producing emotional dispositions: learning to labour with bodies and feelings

Most tutors are at pains to distance themselves from the idea that beauty therapy is predominately about producing appearance. Echoing the participants in Black’s (2004) study, they position beauty therapy as fundamentally about facilitating wellbeing, confidence, and ‘self-making’, and their own role as about training students to perform this ‘therapeutic’ work. However, the connection between wellbeing and appearance is a taken-for granted one, always implied if not made explicit:

> ...yes, of course, we want to make ourselves look nicer, feel better, but, …[if] you're feeling better, you're more..enthusiastic, you're more confident, and with that, you will then do better things, won't you? (Anne, Tutor, College B).

One of the key discourses used by tutors in talking about the difficulties involved in teaching positions students entering courses as fundamentally 'narcissistic' rather than 'caring' and client- oriented. All the tutors saw the majority of new students, and many of the established ones, as primarily concerned with their own appearance and as seeing beauty therapy as a vehicle for being able to produce a glamorous and idealized femininity. One of the primary tasks for tutors, as they construct it, is to transform this 'narcissism' into 'care of others'.

> Beauty Therapy is all about the client. It's all about them, making them feel better…and listening to their problems… I mean listening skills…compassion, empathy …it's just.. they're quite young and they.. struggle (Marina, Tutor, College A).

It is possible that where students are preoccupied with their own performance of bodily femininity there is less room for attending to or understanding the 'needs' of others. The focus on self-production is certainly suggested in most students' accounts of 'choosing' beauty therapy (see chapter seven). The tension between 'care of self' and 'care of others' is expressed particularly strongly by Jaime:

> I like doing it on me, but I don't like doing it on people, because I don't…know what they like … and I get frustrated…it's quite hard if they turn around and say 'oh, I want foundation' but [addressing hypothetical client]…'I don't know if you want to like look as if you've got make-up on'…it's… really hard (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

Most tutors explain this as a reflection of students' immaturity. Feminists have long argued that, for women, the process of growing up involves developing a self-sacrificial disposition toward the needs of others. However, the attainment of contemporary adult femininity also requires women to expend considerable time and energy on the production of themselves through appearance in a way that is often legitimized via a

discourse of hedonistic self-indulgence (Attwood, 2005)[66], and is resonant of Foucault's understanding of technologies of the self as 'practices of freedom':

> One must not have the care of others to precede the care of the self. The care of the self takes a moral precedence in the measure that the relationship to the self takes ontological precedence (Foucault, 1988, cited in Skeggs, 1997:64)

The beauty therapy student is caught up in these tensions. She must be immersed in the practices of feminine self-presentation and embody this in her appearance and demeanor, but in the training salon she must learn to mobilize these dispositions primarily as resources for ministering to the emotional and aesthetic requirements of other women she may have little in common with and no affective connection to . It is unsurprising that the negotiation of these tensions is difficult for new students, particularly the younger ones who are arguably still only beginning to negotiate "the contradictory sets of regulations into which young women have to insert themselves" (Frost, 2001:78). At the same time, however, the way in which many of these young women prioritized their own appearance is in contrast to Skeggs' care students for whom "the care of the self is a distant object….it is others who take moral precedence" (Skeggs, 1997: 64)

In terms of 'readiness' for this kind of work, there is a difference between those students who brought relatively more cultural capital from family background, education, work and 'life experience' and those who brought less. From the early stages of their courses Emma and Abigail were mostly enthusiastic about the salon sessions where students are assessed on their performance of treatments on paying clients. In contrast, students with fewer resources, who also tended to be those with ambivalent or negative feelings about being on their courses, were more likely to express anxiety and reticence about performing treatments on strangers, at least in the initial stages of their training. Although there are similarities between beauty therapy and other forms of 'caring'

[66] As is encapsulated in the long running L'Oreal marketing campaign strapline, "Because you're worth it", more recently adapted to "because *we're* worth it" (Wolkowitz, 2006:167).

labour, this finding differs markedly from Colley's (2006) research in which girls from the most disadvantaged backgrounds who had most experience of caring for elders or siblings settled more easily into their care work training. Many of the beauty girls had also cared for younger siblings or other family members and care-related work had been considered by several participants. But as suggested in chapter seven, if beauty therapy represents an escape from caring for others for some students, the centrality of emotional labour in beauty therapy may come as unwelcome surprise. However, there are also other reasons for the different degrees of fit between students' dispositions and the demands of beauty therapy.

Unsurprisingly, students with no experience of working in a commercialized context (including Level 1 students and students who had entered their programmes at Level 2) tended to find client sessions more daunting. Some Level 2 students who had progressed from Level 1 felt that clients had much higher expectations of level 2 students and were often more demanding. Because of a shortage of clients, bringing in friends and family was actively encouraged by tutors but this was not always easy where mothers, sisters or friends were working or struggled afford the cost of a treatment. However, where this was possible it was perceived by students as a less 'scary' option because it alleviated the pressure of having to perform in a 'professional' way, at least when they were not being observed by tutors.

> ….even though you're not really meant to, I can have a proper giggle with my mates, and like if I go wrong they don't mind because they like know me. (Amber, Level 1, College B).

It may be relevant here to consider the significance of 'having a laugh' as a way of making life more bearable for those, like Amber, who have little investment in the education or jobs in which they find themselves. The way in which she positions herself against the rules stipulated by tutors also suggests that having "a proper giggle" could be read as a strategy "for wresting control of symbolic and real space from official authority" (Willis, 1977:54), a way of staging some kind of resistance to authority

(Skeggs, 2005) and, in this instance, to the discourse of ‘professionalism’ as it is promoted by tutors. However, whilst this may signal a habitus at odds with the norms of the beauty therapy course, there is no suggestion that Amber and her friends are deriding ‘beauty culture’ itself, at least as they understand and embody it. Indeed, this is central to the ‘pleasure’ of ‘girly’ friendships and to both their ‘choice’ of beauty therapy and their involvement in counter-cultural behavior on the course.

Some participants were concerned about not knowing how to make conversation or interact with clients they did not know. Tutors’ often interpreted this as reflecting a lack ‘communication skills’. However, the fact that students appeared to be able to communicate adequately when performing treatments on family or friends suggests that their perceived deficiencies relate to something beyond ‘ordinary’ communication. Although lack of confidence may account for these difficulties, the following narrative suggests that the ‘problem’ has more to do with students not conforming to the kinds of ‘body techniques’ (Wolkowitz, 2006) required of beauty therapists as service workers and emotional labourers:

> …generally a lot of them can't communicate with people. So we do sort of teach them…. the importance about eye contact…body language, non verbal signs…if they are sat on reception….they should be smiling, and you never have your hands on your hips or have your arms folded (Sharon, tutor, College A).

Some students talked about actively avoiding contact with clients by crossing their names off appointments lists made by tutors at the beginning of salon sessions and replacing them with the names of other students:

> I get nervous and shy ..... and just like clam up when I’m doing it [laughs]…if I have clients in the books now, I rub them out in my name and put in someone else’s….We all do it [laughs]. All of us do it… if we can’t be bothered (Amber, Level 1, College B).

However, as Amber's account suggests, this strategy is not only a response to lack of confidence but a way of resisting the requirements of the course. Like the Lads in Willis's (1977) study, some of the beauty girls had hit upon a collective strategy to subvert a learning culture which was felt as an imposition rather than an 'opportunity'. However, it is also a strategy which threatens to reproduce the 'failures' of previous educational experiences. Although it was sometimes possible to go through an entire salon session without contact with clients, students were aware that passing the course depended on being assessed on their performance with paying customers. In addition, those not treating clients were required to practise beauty techniques on other students during the sessions. They may have been knowingly subverting the rules but resistance, in this context, is contained within the familiar and safe boundaries of normative feminine practice as defined in this context.

Managing emotions

Some students expressed preferences for particular for types of treatments and clients and this was often related to the difficulties of managing their own emotional reactions and those of clients.

> …it's better doing a manicure, because if [it's] a facial.. it's quite hard because you're meant to be making them in a relaxed state, but they don't want to stop talking and you can't say to them, "stop talking"…One woman was talking…and I'd be…wiping the cleaner over her and she's… yapping away and then she's going, "oh, the bloody cream's going in my mouth" and I was like, "sorry!" (Kelly, Level 2, College B)

The age of clients in relation to type of treatment was also seen as important. For instance, Level 2 students often found it easier to do make-up on younger clients because they felt more confident in judging the aesthetic 'preferences' of women closer

to their own age. In some of cases, however, students said that they preferred older clients:

> I suppose most people here would say, [they prefer] young clients but I don't. I prefer the older people that come in. (Speaking in a welcoming tone to mimic clients) “Hello dear how are you, I've come for a facial” and, you can really look after them (Emma, Level 2, College B).

The tensions involved in having to demonstrate care of others at the same time as monitoring and regulating one’s own appearance echoes the dilemma identified by Ringrose (2008) in which “girls are supposed to be nice, and yet all girls must compete” (Ibid: 40). To the extent that this places students in the contradictory position of both nurturing and being in competition with customers, older clients may well be preferred as posing less of a competitive threat than younger ones and providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to empathize or care.

Mobilizing a caring performance is particularly difficult when dealing with rude or abusive clients. Several students talked about such experiences and about feeling humiliated during client salon sessions:

> ..you get a lot of rude people in. You can feel…their really bad vibes towards you, and … you get nervous…and then you end up messing up the treatment and…getting shouted at by your teacher. And it's just like, ‘oh no, I don't want to do this’ (Tania, Level 2, College A)

In a small number of cases, clients had been abusive both verbally and in a way that bordered on physical abuse. For instance, Kelly recounted an incident in which she had made a mistake in preparing to perform a leg wax and the client had to wait for her treatment:

> …I said "we're just waiting for a new wax pot". And she went "I told you that I need to be out by a quarter to three, bitch"…oh for God's sake, can't you just use that one?" And I said, "it will burn you". And she went "try it out on yourself"….she was like shouting at me…and it burnt my arm…and she went "put it on my leg" and I went "I'm not going to…because it will burn you"…..and I put it on her leg and she went… "ow!...You stupid idiot!" … and you can't answer back. (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

The accounts of some tutors also suggested that dealing with degrading treatment was a significant feature of their working lives as Beauty Therapists:

> …it's bloody hard work! You're on your feet all day…you…don't get paid that much really, you get treated like a servant, you get spoken to like a servant.. But…I just think, if you love it … it's not even like doing a job. (Anne, Tutor, College B).

This resonates with other studies of beauty related occupations in which therapists legitimize their 'love' of the work in the face of power inequalities and poor working conditions on the grounds that they are performing a socially important function in using their 'superior knowledge' to care for their clients regardless of how they behave[67]. However, as both Gimlin (2002) and Black (2004) suggest, the 'deep acting' which allows workers to put the demands of clients before their own feelings or 'expert' judgments also undermines claims to 'professionalism'. Whilst beauty therapists might see themselves as having a "dominant position in the hierarchy of beauty culture" (Gimlin, 2002: 29), the social class differences which often exist between workers and clients tend to trump this and undermine the capacity of beauty therapists to assert their own judgments in ways that would be characteristic of professional occupations. These power differences are arguably exacerbated in the relationship between young inexperienced students and the clients using the college salons. In this case, students

[67] In this sense, beauty therapists could be seen as 'prisoners of love' in the same way as care workers whose jobs are, according to Folbre (2001), subject to the idea that the intrinsic rewards of caring for others is compensation for low pay and poor working conditions.

become victims not only of the symbolic violence contained in the gendered and classed discourses of beauty therapy, but also of forms of structural and interpersonal violence in their dealings with clients.

However, for some students there is clearly a sense of satisfaction in demonstrating the 'emotional expertise' to manage 'demanding' encounters (Walkowitz, 2006). This is particularly so for students who had brought a relatively a greater amount of cultural capital to their courses and whose confidence in communicating with clients and in their own skills and abilities allowed them shrug off 'bad experiences':

> I love it [treating clients]..but…I had a lady in and she obviously knew what she wanted and I obviously didn't give her what she wanted, and she wasn't very impressed about that…she told me that it [a facial] didn't last long enough and it did last long enough - I made sure of it…. She didn't really knock my confidence because I know I didn't do anything wrong (Emma, Level 2, College B).

The accounts of other students are more resonant of Hochschild's (1983) understanding of the distress caused by the dissonance between a worker's 'real' feelings and those she is expected to perform. In Kelly's case, for example, not being able to "answer back" suggests a sense of powerlessness which confirms the low status accorded to the beauty therapist. In contrast, the power inequalities which prevent her from asserting her own judgment are not as salient for Emma and the cultural capital she is able to bring to the encounter may shield her from the 'hidden injuries of class' (Sennett &Cobb, 1972) suggested in Kelly's account. In addition, Emma may be much more able to perform as a 'professional' beauty therapist. This is not necessarily a consciously learnt ability on her part but a product of the middle class symbolic resources on which she is able to draw. In addition, her future- oriented disposition allows her to see such encounters as 'useful experiences'-in effect, as capital to be acquired for future use.

The concept of professionalism is ubiquitous throughout participants' accounts and is constantly circulated in interactions between tutors and students. Tutors often refer to specialist skills and knowledge as evidence of the 'seriousness' and value of beauty therapy. However, the trope of 'professionalism' is mostly used as short hand for the aesthetic and behavioural dispositions- being cheerful, polite, confident and attractive- required to produce an appropriate service to clients, and is often communicated to students in salon sessions via continuously repeated incitements to control their bodily and emotional displays in line with this. This "restricted definition of professionalism" (Vincent & Braun, 2011: 775) has been identified in predominantly female service occupations not traditionally seen as professional (Hochschild, 1983) and in lower level vocational training. Vincent and Braun, for instance, draw attention to the way in which the use of the concept is used on Level 2 and 3 early years training and invokes not only 'specialist knowledge, "but also what sort of person one is, how one appears and conducts oneself" (ibid, 2011: 775)

> ….the language of professionalism becomes a mechanism for fostering occupational compliance…through realigning identities and working practices (Waring and Waring cited in Ibid, 2011:775)

How this regulation of dispositions might take place in everyday interactions on the beauty therapy courses is suggested in the following extract from an observation of a level 1 salon session at College B:

> Tutor: OK ladies, we need to think about making your client comfortable. What do we need to do?
>
> *(no response from the any of the fourteen students present who are either sitting on treatment beds chatting or moving around the room collecting equipment and setting up work stations in preparation for clients)*

Tutor: We need to ensure good air circulation, minimize smells…eye contact, posture, smiling, warm, professional, friendly …. Why do we do consultations?
Becky (student): We can't do them [only level 2 and 3 students carry out consultations]
Tutor: How would you say that to them? You could offer them something else.
Ellie (student): A mini-facial
Tutor: Well done!
(Tutor turns to Amber who is about to leave the salon to collect her client from reception)
Tutor: What about your fringe?
(Sends Amber to get a hair grip)
Tutor: That looks more professional doesn't it?

In this context the language of professionalism becomes a disciplinary mechanism aimed at producing the 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997) or 'appropriate' (Black, 2004) dispositions of a vocational habitus: the ability to manage clients' experience and to 'appeal to their senses' by "looking good and sounding right" (Wolkowitz, 2006: 86). It is a vehicle through which students are incited to internalize and embody the gendered and classed relations of beauty therapy and a means of obscuring the power relations underpinning the structural violence of low pay, poor conditions and deference to clients.

The claim of professionalism also rests on the framing of Beauty therapy as socially valuable and necessary work. The therapeutic discourses of helping 'people feel better about themselves' so that they "will then do better things" (Anne, Tutor, College B) is rehearsed in both the accounts of tutors and students. The implication that engaging in beauty practices is not only key to a woman's psychological wellbeing but also to her personal advancement makes it unthinkable that it might also reflect and reproduce social and economic disadvantage. Whilst the 'project of professionalism' in beauty

therapy (Black, 2004) may be useful to tutors in their struggle for recognition and in promoting a vocational identity to students, it also operates as symbolic violence against those same individuals, the language of professionalism calling forth a series of misrecognitions.

Empowerment, pleasure and success: inhabiting dispositions

The micro- management of students' behavior and appearance (Vincent & Braun, 2011) is key in defining the dispositional parameters within which they learn what it means to be a beauty therapist. However, it is through the actual practices involved in performing the role that students begin to develop, to greater or lesser extents, a commitment to beauty therapy and more "embedded working identities" (Ibid, 2011: 773). Such identities develop not just because of cumulative experience [68], but also through the increased sense of self-value gained from the mastery of 'professional' beauty skills and from pleasing clients. This is suggested in the following accounts from student interviews conducted towards the end of the academic year:

> …the other day I did get a bit nervous because I had to do a facial … [on] the Head of College…And she told me that she's never had a level one perform it like that and she said that she was really proud of me and that she really enjoyed her treatment (Jenna, Level 1, College A)

> I…didn't know how to do nail art when I first started here, and now I do it…on my sister and on my friends, and my boss wants me to do it. She's going to pay me. When I first started I was just, "oh this is boring. I don't want to listen", but [laughs] now…. (Amber, Level 1, College B).

The sense of triumph and transformation expressed in these accounts may in part reflect how important this kind success and its recognition are for young women who

[68] For Bourdieu, lasting transformations in habitus are brought about through prolonged and continuous pedagogic inculcation (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

have been defined as ‘failures’ at school. Bartky’s analysis is useful here in understanding how the disciplinary regimes of beauty therapy, which require workers to develop a more extreme embeddedness in beauty practices in comparison with most other women (Gimlin, 2002), actually produce subjectivities partly because of the ontological importance of seeing oneself as a skilled and capable person regardless of what “it may have cost them to acquire them and… whether, as a gender, they would have been better off had they never had to acquire them in the first place” (Bartky, 1990:77). In addition, success, as Bourdieu suggests, involves accepting the criteria on which it has been recognized (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Valuing and internalizing beauty skills means valuing and internalizing the meanings and social relations underpinning beauty culture, at least as it is transmitted through the courses. Students’ sense of ‘empowerment’ in developing and being validated for skills is therefore central to the way in which they become immersed in beauty therapy. This suggests a way of understanding women’s relationship to beauty which is very different to that proposed by Gimlin (2002) and Davis (1995). Both assume that women’s ‘pleasure’ in ‘doing looks’ is testimony to their autonomy and ‘choice’ in using beauty practices for ‘self-empowerment’. However, the process of vocational identification on the beauty therapy courses suggests that these feelings are both produced by disciplinary regimes , and play a key role in ‘pulling them in’ to normative (hetero)gendered ‘personal’ and vocational identities. This also provides a way of thinking about students’ affective ties to beauty and beauty therapy in terms of how they function as a form of symbolic violence. When initially ambivalent feelings about beauty therapy are transformed into more positive ones it signals a change which brings the subjective structures of the habitus closer to the objective structures (Kraiss, 1993) underpinning the field. ‘Pleasure’ and ‘empowerment’ may produce the illusion of the self as the ‘right person for the job’ (Colley et al, 2003), and erase the relations of domination which have produced that self.

The symbolic violence involved in this process is also arguably at work in the way tutors see their role in nurturing young women, particularly those perceived as most problematic in terms of ability and dispositions:

> The most rewarding thing is seeing them achieve…People like Carmel, who… said, "I can't do it because I'm thick"…., [she] is so proud of what she's achieved. I've got a lovely thank you card from my girls …and inside it said "Thank you for putting up with us this year. We know we've been difficult but at least we've finished…" (Carol, Tutor, College B)

The considerable work and commitment that goes into teaching students who may be bored, alienated from learning and in the beauty classroom partly because of the paucity of other options is indisputable. However, the discourse of achievement serves to obscure the gendered and classed nature of the 'transformations' students undergo, whilst the rhetoric of tutors' caring dedication to 'their girls' masks the exercise of symbolic violence which makes "the dominant habitus seem more universal and natural" (Herr & Anderson, 2003: 419).

"I just get used to it": feelings and 'intimate' practices

Students are required not only to perform the full range of beauty practices as specified in the NVQ curriculum but must also experience how these practices feel to a client. Before being, as one tutor put it, "let loose" on paying customers, tutors demonstrate each treatment and the various techniques associated with them on students who then practice on each other in pairs and small groups.

Amongst the practices which students tend to find particularly difficult are those defined as 'sensitive' or 'intimate' and which usually involve the removal of facial or body hair through waxing. These practices are only taught at Levels 2 and 3 (see Appendix 1), not just because of the perceived level of technical skills needed, but also because of the level of 'maturity' deemed necessary to carry out such treatments:

> It… requires quite a bit of maturity to deal with… bikini waxing, underarm waxing and lip waxing. All those sorts of things are quite sensitive (Sally, Tutor, College B).

This account acknowledges the central importance of hair removal in producing the feminine body and the extreme embarrassment and distress women experience in relation to 'unwanted' hair. (Chapkis, 1986; Jefferys, 2005; Black, 2004). The normalization of teenage feminine competition (Ringrose, 2008) may in part explain why they are perceived to lack empathy or the tact necessary for the 'sensitive' regulation of the boundaries of femininity:

> …at that age… they can be very judgmental …so they judge people quite harshly and that's not being empathetic… We're there just to make that person feel better (Marina, Tutor, College B).

The issues of sensitivity and maturity in relation to bikini waxing encompass a set of meanings which are more overtly to do with producing a (hetero)sexualized feminine body and it is the practice which Level 2 students expressed most unease about:

> I've never had a bikini wax or seen one or anything like that and it's just a… bit weird the first time you do it. I'm sure it will be fine eventually but…. we all felt it you know, that it was a bit strange doing it (Emma, Level 2, College B).

The difficulty students had in articulating the sexualized implications of bikini waxing echoes Black's notion of sexuality as "an absent present" (Black, 2004:98) in beauty salons and may point to a paradox at the heart of the beauty therapy. Whilst beauty therapists labour to produce (hetero)sexually desirable feminine bodies, presenting their work as 'serious' and 'respectable' means distancing themselves from these sexualized meanings (Ibid: 2004), a distancing that is also suggested in tutors' insistence that beauty therapy is about wellbeing rather than appearance.

Emma's response may reflect the ways in which 'body workers' in general must learn to handle "potentially powerful and unsettling experiences [which carry] the potential for sensate interaction, identification, desire and merging" (Wolkowitz. 2006: 169). In this context, her perception of bikini waxing as "just a bit weird' might suggest some anxiety about the potential for lesbian desire. However, the heterosexualized nature of this particular practice was underscored by a tutor (not in the research group) who told me that bikini waxing was as far as they could go in teaching young students the skills to perform the more popular salon practice of Brazilian waxing, a practice which, according to Jeffreys (2005), owes much to the 'domestication of pornography' (see chapter three).

On the beauty courses, bikini waxing is perhaps the most 'extreme' example of a range of appearance practices aimed at producing the objectified feminine body. It is therefore one of the most obvious examples of how the aesthetic labour girls are trained to perform on their own and others' bodies can also be seen as a form of sexualized labour, contrary Black's claims that beauty therapy is not really sexualized work (Black, 2004). However, the discourse of beauty therapy as a technology of female wellbeing and confidence obscures this, as does the 'de-sexualized' appearance expected of students at most times. What is implied here is that beauty practices are about women creating themselves for *themselves* and not about servicing men. However, as some commentators have suggested, this discourse is also at the centre of contemporary consumer cultures' attempt to market (hetero)sex to women (Attwood, 2005) and to create a 'new' sexually autonomous feminine subject who nevertheless embraces a self which "comes straight out of the most predictable templates of male sexual fantasy" (Gill, 2009:102)[69]. The disavowal of sex relies to some extent on the physical absence of the male gaze. The beauty therapy training salons are 'feminine spaces' and the presence of men is relatively unusual and regulated. In this context such discourses may be particularly powerful in sustaining the heteronormative illusion that if the male

[69] The way in which participants' distance themselves and their practices from sexual connotations is similar to the way in which, according to Storr, Ann Summers customers and party organizers "see lingerie as 'nice' when it is 'not about sex'" (Storr, 2003, cited in Attwood, 2005:399).

gaze is absent, so is sex and that beauty therapy is therefore a ‘respectable’ occupation.

Desexualizing the bikini wax may help students ‘overcome’ their initial aversion and transform it into a pragmatic approach to ‘getting on with the job’:

> I think everything’s the same really in that….eugh!...It’s all body… it doesn’t bother me now. Everyone has one done in their lifetime anyway really (Abigail, Level 2, College A)

> They've just got to get on with it. They might make a fuss first few times but then it’s just…ok (Sharon, tutor).

However, not all students are able to make this transition:

> …there's been..girls that have not really wanted to…. have a bikini wax in front of everybody…… But there's two particularly shy girls, and…one of them left in the end because she just couldn't…do it (Anne, Tutor, College B).

In learning beauty therapy, students must allow their bodies to be displayed to tutors and other students so that treatments can be demonstrated and practiced. Tops have to be removed for underarm waxing, massage and even facials. Leg waxing involves the removal of lower clothing, and bikini waxing, the partial removal of underwear. One of the essential ‘learning points’ of these practices, according to tutors, is that students become aware of the vulnerability and anxiety that might be experienced by clients and learn how to protect ‘modesty’ by closing curtains around treatment beds and using towels to cover ‘intimate’ areas of a client’s body. Treatments which are about improving appearance – ‘grooming’ and ‘corrective treatments’ (Black, 2004) - focus on most areas of the body. Arms, legs, feet, pubic region and face are exposed to be scrutinized and worked on. The implicit message that the bodies on display in these salon training sessions are inadequate and in need of improvement could well reinforce

the already developed sense of inhabiting an inferiorized body (Bartky, 1990) suggested in many students' accounts (see chapter seven) . In addition, more obviously sexualized practices may have particular implications for working class girls because of their vulnerability to being stigmatized and defined in terms of their sexual behavior (Skeggs, 1997; 2005). It may be for these reasons, rather than any critical resistance to the disciplines of beauty, that some students remove themselves from such practices. However, a significant question here is why most students appear to overcome 'shyness' in relation to having treatments which involve such bodily display.

Part of the answer must be that bikini waxing is a compulsory element of the course and leaving is not always a realistic possibility. As one student commented, starting another course would only be possible if you or your parents could afford the fees and equipment. However, there may also be a sense in which getting used to exposing the body during training sessions may be helped by students' already having a 'feel for the game' of being "constantly exposed to the objectification performed by the gaze and the discourse of others" (Bourdieu, 2001:63). In addition, the 'others' in this (hetero)gendered scenario are women whose gaze, unlike the male gaze, is assumed to be non-sexual (heterosexual) and therefore non-threatening:

> ….there was a bit of a problem [with a boy on a BT course]… in that when it came to things like bikini waxing…. some of the girls were like "Ohhh" and… there wasn't a good vibe (Sally, Tutor, College B).

The exception which legitimizes these assumptions is gay men/boys who are seen as being capable of assimilation into the world of the beauty training salon and are attributed with a benign 'feminine gaze'.

> I think even if they did have an interest it would be very intimidating unless really they're gay…..then…the girls aren't worried about it (Marina, Tutor, College A).

The fact that students take the role of beauty therapists as well as clients during training sessions suggests a mutuality which echoes the 'girly' practices engaged in by students outside of their courses with friends and family. But this sense of being 'safe' in an 'all girls together' environment belies the extent to which women 'measure' themselves and each other against notions of normative femininity "constructed from within heterosexuality and on male territory" (Holland et al, 1998). If beauty therapy and its practices are primary sites in securing women's complicity in the production of femininity (Bartky, 1990) then it seems legitimate to argue that a key element of the hidden curriculum on beauty therapy courses involves the production of workers as "employees of a male gaze" (Renold & Allen, 2006; 462).

Producing the 'look'

I use the idea of 'producing the look' to encompass both the ways in which students' appearance is scrutinized and regulated in the production of their bodies as material signifiers of the ethos of beauty therapy, and the ways in which the courses attempt to produce students as surveillants of other women. In addressing these issues, I draw on both Foucauldian and Bourdieusian approaches. I conceptualize 'the look' in terms of an introjected disciplinary male gaze (Holland et al, 1998; Bartky, 1990) through which women regulate their own bodily femininity and that of other women. However, 'the look' can also be understood through the notion of habitus as gendered and classed aesthetic dispositions. The ideal bodily dispositions associated with the beauty therapist (as these are understood and promoted by tutors) may have a degree of fit with those a student brings to the course, or may require her to adjust her habitus to more closely conform to them. She may also, at times, resist these judgments or at least find ways of working around them. In addition, inasmuch as the habitus embodies accumulated capitals (Skeggs, 1997), a Bourdieusian approach also provides a model for thinking about how struggles over appearance are informed by the unequal resources students and tutors bring to the courses and by the symbolic power of class inflected notions of 'appropriate' or 'respectable' femininity as these inform the 'look' of the beauty therapist.

In drawing on these two frameworks it is possible to explore the ways in which disciplinary and symbolic power work as forms of violence obscuring the power relations which underpin 'the look'.

Transforming aesthetic dispositions; femininity and class

As suggested earlier, a key concern of tutors is to transform what they see as students' narcissism' into 'care of others'. The tension between these is reflected in the feminine aesthetic which a student is required to embody as a trainee beauty therapist. It is an appearance which demonstrates her own concern with a particular class inflected version of femininity (light make-up, manicured nails, clean and tidy hair and uniform) whilst at the same time signifying a 'rational' subjectivity as a 'therapist' with 'expert knowledge' of techniques and practices to improve the appearance and 'wellbeing' of clients. The beauty therapy students, echoing Black's (2004) research, are expected to wear 'understated' make-up and to embody what is often referred to by tutors and students as 'a natural look' which is nevertheless the product of constant surveillance and instruction by tutors and which may ultimately translate into an 'appropriate' bodily self-production by students.

> When we start teaching make-up…we sort of try and soften their look and take off their nail extensions and things like…you're breaking down those sort of …barriers….you're breaking them down into a beauty therapist as you go along really (Sharon, Tutor, College A).

The figure of the beauty therapist, a product of this Goffmanesque 'breaking down' process, appears to be a feminine subject who is able to demonstrate a kind of mastery over the "uncomfortable paradox" of being a being woman (Frost, 2001: 81) in which feminine identity is both "welded to the body" at the same time as the body is lived as "something not themselves, as something at a conceptual distance from themselves" (Ibid, 2001:76). Not only, as Frost argues, does this "sense of separation from the

body… happen to girls as they develop and take an ambivalent and critical stance towards the 'not them' bodies they inhabit" (Ibid, 2001:79; see also Young, 1989), it is also arguably a pre-requisite for becoming a beauty therapist. The problem for tutors is not primarily about training girls to develop a critical stance towards themselves as objects since in most cases, as suggested in chapter seven, this is already an established disposition. It is rather a case of 'breaking down' and re-shaping the aesthetic values or 'tastes' contained in the self- critical gaze so that the aesthetic work which students have engaged in since childhood can be mobilized as aesthetic and emotional labour in the production of acceptably gendered and classed bodies, their own and others'.

This process begins at interview. One tutor suggested that 'an unacceptable' presentation might be a reason to consider rejection. However, it is also, as one tutor put it, "something we can work on". Recruitment is seen as the beginning of the process of dispositional change. In this context, appearance at interview is seen as a legitimate target for comment and criticism:

> ….if somebody turned up and really… hadn't bothered to make any effort I'd…say, "do you think you've turned up today appropriately to indicate to me that that's what you want to do?" (Philippa, Tutor and Programme Manager, College B).

That these values are implicitly classed is strongly indicated in tutors' accounts of the ideal beauty therapist. Sharon makes this particularly explicit.

> [they are] not allowed to wear any jewellery, so that immediately gets rid of all the chavvy rings [laughs]. (Sharon, Tutor, College A).

Whilst the prohibition of jewellery in the training salons is most often legitimized on the grounds of 'hygiene' there are clearly other concerns at work here. Explicit or implicit references to notions of working class femininity as undesirable or 'unprofessional' in

the context of beauty therapy is ubiquitous in the tutors' accounts of the presentation and behavior of applicants and students. This may in part reflect the class positioning of tutors who, at least by virtue of becoming qualified FE teachers, are mainly upwardly mobile women from working class or lower middle class backgrounds, may have felt a particular need to disassociate themselves and their occupation with signifiers of working -classness (Walkerdine, 2001; Felski, 2000). They also see it as part of their job to groom students for work in a range of contexts with different class inflected appearance rules:

> We talk about the way they present themselves, the way they dress… we've talked about… different types of salons and why some people prefer to go to one rather than another…. perhaps an expensive glossy salon or a little country, more villagey type one (Carol, Tutor, College B).

However, regardless of the classed locations of the clients whom students are being trained to service, the ideal femininity reflected in tutors accounts also resonates with the ways in which, according to McRobbie (2004), the female body is increasingly used as a site onto which new regimes of class differentiation and antagonism are projected. In this context the bodily habitus of working class women, defined by tutors in terms of the 'chavvy vulgarity' and 'hyper-femininity' of cheap jewellery or 'heavy' make-up, is implicitly counterposed to the "well-groomed success" (Ibid, 2004:101) normatively associated with middle class women and to which all women are required to aspire as part of the cultural process of post-feminist female individualization (McRobbie, 2009). If the 'fashion-beauty complex' plays a central role in promoting connections between feminine appearance, individualized success and status, it is not surprising that the transformation of working class teenagers into beauty therapists who must embody and promote these (hetero)gendered and classed norms often involves symbolically violent denigratory judgments about their appearance and the notion that these 'failings' must be corrected.

> Everyone's being…looked at… you have to wear make-up, you have to be presentable… and your teacher checks all it …you'll get told you smell:; "just go and have a wash", or "go and change your clothes", because it's not presentable, it's not how you should be…. if you haven't brushed your teeth …you've got to go and sort it out…My teacher's made me cry many a time…..if you can't do something, the whole class has got to know about it. (Tania, Level 2, College A)

Tensions in producing 'the look'

Uniforms

There is, however, some dissent amongst students about formal notions of an appropriate bodily habitus for a beauty therapist, not least in relation to uniforms. Although the uniform is ostensibly worn for functional reasons connected to hygiene and safety, it is also part of the over-all look which signifies conformity to the norms and values of the learning culture as well as those of the beauty industry. The conformity expected by tutors, however, is not just a matter of 'putting on' the uniform but of internalizing its codes (Craik, 2003; 2005). So, for example, whilst it might help to neutralize or 'cover up' bodily signs of working class femininity, vocational attributes signified by the uniform should also be embodied by students. The uniform, as Craik argues, is not only about control of a 'social self' but also of an 'inner self'. The way in which a minority of students embrace beauty therapy as a vocational identity is suggested in their favorable view of the uniform as emblematic of becoming a 'beauty girl'. Conversely, dissent is suggested in the perception of the uniform as a symbolic burden inviting unwelcome scrutiny and creating a sense of dissonance between the self and the identity announced by the uniform.

> I think it's how people look at you… they see a uniform and they think 'you should be looking after yourself' (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

In bringing about dispositional change, one of the first hurdles for tutors is to instill compliance with the dress code, sometimes through the threat of sanctions:

> …she won't come in wearing her uniform…I said to her "right, you've got a choice, you can either go and put your uniform on and be back in the class in two minutes or you can go home and be marked absent (Carol, Tutor, College B).

In Carol's view, the success of this strategy is indicated when students not only wear the uniform but (appear to) demonstrate a deeper and longer term identification with it:

> If you read what she put in her presentation, great emphasis on wearing uniform and she actually said "I'm going to be better at wearing my uniform next year" (Carol, Tutor, College B).

In the context of beauty therapy courses the uniform represents a key site on which struggles over appearance and identity take place. The two colleges have similar beauty therapy uniforms of a thin black (College B) or blue (College A) cotton tunic and femininely styled trousers. The styling is generally disliked by students, although those at college B expressed a particular aversion to their cropped trousers. In both colleges, students are required to wear the uniform during salon sessions. However, many change into their own clothes during breaks to avoid being seen in it outside the salons. Though some students said the uniform made them uncomfortably cold in winter, the reasons usually given for this relate to it being seen as unfashionable, or as being impractical in maintaining a feminine appearance.

> I don't like wearing the uniform….. I don't like three quarter lengths because that means you have to shave your legs again and again and…ugh, not nice…. I like having long thingies because then you don't have to bother so much (Louisa, Level 1, College B):

One attempt to change quickly out of and back into the full uniform between sessions, was thwarted by tutors at college B:

> … when it was break they used to wear leggings and tops[uniform tunics] but we got told off about that… saying it's unprofessional…you either wear all your own clothes or the uniform (Louisa, Level 1, College B).

Students' reluctance to be seen in their uniforms may also be tied up with the low status publically accorded to beauty therapy which, as suggested in chapter seven, some students are well aware of. Whilst tutors' investment in promoting the 'professionalism' of beauty therapy may partly explain their defense of the uniform, which in most cases they also wear in college, for students with relatively little vocational investment the uniform "may represent a source of embarrassment rather than pride" (Joseph &Alex, 1972: 720). In this sense, students may be more sensitized to the structural relations conveyed by the uniform (Craik, 2003), relations which become clearer in considering the influences on uniforms in commercial beauty settings as well as in the colleges.

The often clinicized look associated with beauty therapy uniforms, and reflected in the appearance norms on the beauty therapy courses, is symptomatic of the ways in which, as discussed in chapter three, beauty therapists lay claim to a body of knowledge and skills comparable with workers in health related occupations widely accepted as professions in the traditional sense (Black, 2004). However, this message is undermined by the way in which the uniforms and accompanying body techniques also signify the naturalized femininity associated with beauty practices. Arguably, the beauty therapy uniform, although varying between sites within the industry , is a case par excellence of the contradictory nature of female uniforms which on the one hand signify traditionally masculine attributes of regulation, practicality and discipline but on the other, exude particular classed notions of femininity including "tailored modesty, meekness and demureness" (Craik, 2003:128). In the case of beauty therapy, uniforms must also signify as well as underplay heterosexual attractiveness (Black, 2004). In this sense they are markers of subservience and feminine service work, a status which is reinforced by their temporal instability - continually "vulnerable to fashion updates" (Craik, 2001: 130) unlike traditional masculine uniforms, (for instance, military or legal costume) and quasi-uniforms (the business suit) . This is reflected in the sartorial

trends in dress codes for students in which there has been a movement away from clinicized white dress to relatively informal styles and colours. In turn, this is suggestive of a shift in the meanings attached to beauty therapy as it moves into new commercial contexts in which 'leisure', as well as health and wellbeing, is a key commodity and in which new types of service work are being created.

> When I was at college [in the late 1980s] we had to have a horrible tent type dress-white… it's much more casual [now] whereas before we were like a nurse …… spas are becoming more fashionable, you're looking at different wear altogether and it's a more leisure type wear (Sally, Tutor, College B).

Students, many of whom would have been negotiating the requirements of school uniforms less than a year previously, may also be enmeshed in the oppositions inscribed in uniforms, particularly in relation to group identification versus individuality, compulsion versus choice and desexualization versus sexualization (Craik, 2003). These oppositions mirror the contradictory regulations around femininity and sexuality within which young women are obliged to position themselves. Whereas the uniform carries little cultural capital in the perception of many students or in dominant public perceptions, individualized displays of femininity through makeup and dress can more easily be used in competing for value within the "local hierarchies of corporal capital" (Skeggs, 1997: 104) established by students.

> …on a Tuesday we have a practical in the morning and the rest of the day we can wear what we want, and it's just like when you come in… you've got to look your best because it's a competition of who looks the best (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

In one sense, the demure and subservient feminine habitus signified by the uniform and the bodily standardization it imposes is at odds with the sexualized self-production necessary for contemporary young women to 'function as female subjects' (McRobbie, 2009). But whilst students might see self- stylization as a way of freeing themselves

from the imposed constraints of the uniform and possibly from its association with low status work, this 'freedom' is contained both by the limits imposed through beauty therapy training in which conformity as well as resistance are focused on bodily appearance, and by the technologies of self-hood imposed by contemporary constructions of heteronormative female individualization (Ibid, 2009).

> …you've got to wear uniform haven't you, so like different makeup would make you stand out more…. (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

In this sense, the 'freedom' of bodily self-stylization is revealed as being as illusory and symbolically violent as the 'professionalism' ostensibly signified by the beauty therapy uniform.

Facials: "feeling bare and horrible" without make-up

In policing each other's appearance, students' notions of what 'looks the best' are also often at odds with the seemingly paradoxical requirement that they spend considerable amounts of time on their courses without make-up or other overtly feminine accoutrements. For example, in order to practice facials students must take off all traces of makeup and for many of them this is a source of considerable anxiety.

> …people don't want to have facials because they don't want to take their make-up off….Like you get people that put loads of layers on and… they didn't want people to look at them with no make-up on. Because they might think "Oh, she doesn't look nice" (Chelsea, Level 2, College A)

In contrast to the care students in Skeggs' study, for whom " [S]pending obvious amounts of time with make-up just to go to work or college was seen to be embarrassing and inappropriate" (Skeggs, 1997:108), for most of the beauty therapy students, makeup of some sort was considered to be necessary in presenting the self in virtually all social situations, at least outside of family contexts:

> I have to have [makeup] on if I come to college. I have to have it on if my boyfriend comes round. I have to have it on all the time…. if I don't wear makeup I just feel bare and horrible (Amber, Level 1, College B)

> I'd put foundation on before going to the shops. I wouldn't bother doing all my eye makeup…[but] I'll make sure I put foundation on (Anna, Level 1, College A).

That these are young women whose lack of family responsibilities allows them "the space and time to act out femininity" (Skeggs, 1997: 108) may in part explain their preoccupation with appearance. However, It may also be the case that the increased aestheticization of work and social life in the two decades since Skeggs conducted her fieldwork might make it more difficult for the beauty students to consider the 'performance' of femininity through makeup and other means as 'treat' reserved for 'going out' (Ibid, 1997). The project of producing the body- as –self has a particular relevance when "it becomes increasingly difficult to function as a female subject without subjecting oneself to those technologies of self that are spectacularly feminine" (McRobbie, 2009:60). In addition, given that beauty therapy is a prime site in the definition and promotion of those technologies it is unsurprising if beauty therapy students are under particular pressure to embody such a subjectivity:

> I wouldn't care … like I'd come in with no makeup on....I think it's how people look at you…they see a uniform and they think 'you should be looking after yourself'. (Kelly, Level 2, College B)

Whilst Kelly experiences being subjected to the critical gaze of others as a burden and imposition, other accounts suggest that failing to attract the approving gaze is experienced as a distressing invisibility or even, in Bartky's terms, as a kind of annihilation of the self "as an existing individual" (Bartky, 1990: 77).

…[girls] want to look nice and feel nice about their selves. People take more interest in them, like boys. If you look really nice, then… people, like, look again… sort of thing…but if you don't then [long pause] they just walk straight past you (Amber, Level 1, College B).

"On this course people don't care what you look like": a paradox of surveillance

The "mundane psychic terror associated with not receiving "looks of admiration"" (Goldman, 1992, cited in Gill, 2009: 105) may explain the intense anxiety associated with having to remove makeup in the beauty salon, especially given the 'hierarchies of looks' that operate amongst students. However, as suggested in the first section of this chapter, the training salons are also framed as 'safe spaces' away from the male gaze in which students can 'be themselves' without worrying about what they look like.

Tamsin: ... on this course people don't care what you look like...
Ellie: There's not a lot of bitching like..'urggh she's ugly' or anything
Tamsin: Yes... cause we all have to take our make-up off in facials (Focus group, level 1, College B)

The seemingly counter intuitive statement that no one "cares what you look like" on a beauty therapy course is mirrored in other accounts in which students and tutors stress the 'supportive' nature of relationships in the training salons and the focus on emotional wellbeing rather than personal appearance. In these accounts appearance is again framed as a marker and means of 'feeling good about yourself' rather than an end in itself in a way that echoes Black and Sharma's (1999) view that the practice of beauty therapy centres around the 'deficit body' as 'lacking in love' and confidence rather than beauty:

…when someone's having a bad day, when they're a bit fed up and feeling a bit …fat and spotty…or they need a bit of pampering… they have a facial. As

long as we're learning something, we're allowed to do it. (Emma, Level 2, College B)

As a group… they're usually quite close knit and…there would usually only be compliments so "Ooh I really like your hair today".. "Ooh I love that colour that you've done" or "Oh I wish I had my hair like that" (Karen, Tutor, College A).

This is in part what Black means when she says that women are not concerned with beauty in itself. Rather, beauty practices are used to produce classed, racialized and sexualized performances of self, confidence and wellbeing. On one level, students' intense concern with conforming to and competing on the basis of specific and narrow standards of 'attractiveness' does not support this instrumental framing of beauty. As Felski (2006) argues, just because Black's respondents did not use the concept of 'beauty' in interviews does necessarily mean that it was irrelevant to them. It is also possible that the adult and largely middle class salon users in her study were more able to construct narratives which justified their relationships to beauty practices in ways that avoided implications of 'vanity' and 'superficiality'. However, there is also a sense in which Black's claim is useful in understanding the complexities of surveillance in the beauty training salons.

Whilst on one level students are measured (by tutors and each other) on the basis of particular, though sometimes competing, aesthetic standards, there is also, in some accounts, a stringent denial that there is any one definition of 'beauty' and a critical perception of dominant standards of appearance:

…students sometimes….say "oh so and so has done this or that" and they go yes but that's not real, don't believe what you see in the paper ….that's been airbrushed (Anne, Tutor, College B)

> …when you say ‘beauty’ you instantly think make-up and you think…a beautiful woman…. But I think everyone can be … beautiful.. if you just put some make- up it makes you feel better, you should feel like you’re beautiful basically (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

What often seems to matter more than conforming to idealized standards of appearance is being seen to ‘make an effort’ to ‘take care of’ or ‘make the most of’ yourself, albeit with current norms of feminine embodiment as touchstones. The following statement reflects the link often made in participants’ accounts between appearance, effort and producing the self as a confident, ‘successful’ individual:

> ….you get people who are like really glamorous and people who just don’t try… some people don’t make no effort at all. And I think the under confident people just don’t try (Anna, Level 1, College A)

In these accounts being ‘attractive’ is not an inherent characteristic but something anyone can achieve through effort and skill. But far from implying a more benign understanding of beauty, the apparently democratic and liberal individualist notion that ‘everyone can be beautiful’ belies its disciplinary character and the symbolic violence operating through it. A woman/girl who does not present herself as ‘glamourous’ or hetero(sexually) attractive is not just an inadequate body but a morally inadequate one too (Bourdieu, 2010:294). In a society in which the body has become “the central personal project of…girls” (Brumberg, 1998:97) it is not possible to ‘be unattractive’ without potentially attracting opprobrium. “There are”, according to Helena Rubinstein’s often cited mantra, “no ugly women, only lazy ones” (cited in Ibid, 2002:19).

The following focus group extract, in which students talk about re-applying make-up after facial sessions, exemplifies the way in which those who do not demonstrate a suitably intense concern with appearance are positioned as outsiders.

Amber: ‘Cause everyone’s the same...they all have to go to the toilet to put their make-up back

Izzy : Straight away before you see ANYONE else

Amber: Yeah...every single one of us... except Alex.

Tamsin: (addressing Alex) you don’t really use that much make-up do you?

Izzy: She’s wearing make-up now

Tamsin : Do you go to the toilet, Alex, after you have a facial?

Alex: [very quietly] Mmm

(Focus Group, Level 1, College B)

The typical post-facial rush to get to the mirrors in the salons and toilets can be understood as reflecting both a genuine fear of being seen without make-up and being seen not to have a proper feminine concern with self-presentation. In this extract, Alex is singled out as violating these norms. In my perception of this interaction, her sense of humiliation was tangible and her barely audible response felt like a confession extracted under duress. She could scarcely do anything else but deny her difference. However, the use of understated ridicule and exclusion as sanctions (Osler, 2006) against those who do not demonstrate an overriding concern with appearance is not only a way of regulating group boundaries (‘every single one of us except Alex”) but is also productive of social identities (Currie at al, 2007) by inciting the conformity of all participants to normative femininity as it enacted in this setting.

Making distinctions: Looking ‘natural’, looking ‘fake’

The expectation, discussed earlier, that students should embody a ‘natural look’ is reflected in the more general understanding of the role of ‘grooming’ and ‘corrective’ treatments such as makeup or eyebrow shaping in enhancing ‘natural’ features deemed ‘desirable’ and de-emphasizing ‘undesirable’ ones. ‘Natural’ beauty is positioned by tutors as the ideal femininity which beauty therapists should embody and produce in their clients. In the accounts of most students, although with some ambivalence, the notion of a ‘natural look’ is also used to define an ‘appropriate’ femininity; one that is

both ‘attractive’ and ‘respectable’. The paradox inherent in this concept is dramatized by the way in which participants counterpose it to the notion of a ‘fake’ or ‘plastic’ appearance produced through cosmetic surgery, false nails and eyelashes and exaggerated make-up:

> ‘Fake’ is, like, Jordan. She wears… false eyelashes and she gets ... botox? …She’s plastic with her look. (Chelsea, Level 2, College A)

> …it depends on like what kind of person… you are. Are you going to look as if you’re fake- tanned up, you’re covered in make-up and you’ve got long nails? Or you can just generally still do it all and take care of yourself and still look natural? (Jaime, level 2, College A)

Whilst the ‘fake’ look arguably foregrounds the artifice of femininity as performance (Butler, 1990) or masquerade by revealing the work involved in producing it, the regulation of appearance through the notion of ‘natural beauty’ subsumes the artifice “under the guise of a natural, already present femininity” (Black, 2004:35). The following narrative might suggest a particularly astute insight into this paradox:

> ..when you want a natural look, there's actually a lot of make-up involved in it. You've got your concealer to cover your redness; you've got purple concealer to cover this, that and the other… And you have to know what colours to wear with the right lighting, like if it's going to be a cloudy day, you don't wear translucent powder (Tania, Level 2, College A)

In this sense, the idea of ‘natural beauty’ is arguably more insidious and symbolically violent than ‘fake’ beauty. However, what is perhaps equally as harmful is the dichotomy itself, echoing as it does other socially constructed binaries which have regulated femininity and divided women against each other. Particularly pertinent here is the historical association of cosmetics with sexual availability and prostitution against which white, middle class femininity has been positioned as ‘delicate’, ‘natural’ and

'respectable' (Black, 2004). Whilst the emergence, in the 1950s, of the notion of cosmetics as a tool for enhancing 'natural assets' may have partially displaced or destabilized this dichotomy (Ibid, 2004), the disparagement of women/girls who look too 'fake' or 'plastic' recalls and re-establishes classed divisions between 'nice' and 'bad' femininities. However, these divisions are now being reproduced in the regulatory discourses of post-feminism (Renold & Ringrose, 2008) in which girls and women must walk a tightrope between the hypersexualized femininity demanded by the consumer-led discourses of choice and sexual freedom and older but "tenacious …notions of 'good girls' and 'bad girls" (Gill, 2009:106). If the rejection of a 'fake' appearance by students implies a resistance to hypersexualization (Renold &Ringrose, 2008) it is one contained within the terms of this heteronormative and classed dichotomy:

> What kind of people seem to feel more confident and happy about the way they look? .
>
> I don't really know… the ones that are stuck up their own arses [laughs]… there's some girls in college who cake on their makeup on, like a proper slag (Amber, Level 1, College B).

Female celebrities are often invoked by both students and tutors as archetypes of 'fake beauty'. However, Marina's account indicates that whilst students might disparage this, the sexualization of female celebrity also exerts a powerful influence on their perceptions of attractiveness:

> …what they are looking at is not the before pictures when she [Jordan] was natural and a beautiful woman…they're looking at the big boobs, botox, puffed up.. .thinking she's really attractive and thinking they want to look that way (Marina, Tutor, College A).

This paradox underscores the impossibility of making clear distinctions between "ordinary practices of femininity" (Currie et al, 2007: 27) and those associated with being

too sexualized. For example, whilst one student, Anna, talks about being seen as 'plastic' by other students because she is "addicted" to fake tan, the popularity of this practice amongst students, many of whom elect to do an extra course in spray- tanning, suggests that the line between 'fake' and 'natural' is extremely ambiguous. The same kind of tension is reflected in the responses of focus group participants to a photograph of two young women dressed in revealing clothes and heavy makeup for a day at the races:

> Ella: They're tarted up
> Sophie: Sluts!
> Karin : They're probably nice people…but …if they're going to wear that out…in public!
> Sophie: The one in the pink's got really bad hair…
> Evie: They're probably really nice people…just getting a hard time 'cause they look nice…and other people are jealous… because they're confident enough to be like that…and other people aren't they get…grief really (Focus Group, Level 2, College B)
> Sarah: It doesn't make them bad people…just 'cause they…look nice

The difficulties these students have in agreeing on the difference between 'looking nice' and looking 'like a slut' reflects the impossible paradoxes within which young women are required to position themselves (Griffin et al, 2006, Frost, 2001). Likewise, being 'fake' is both reviled and legible as a contemporary embodiment of successful and confident (hetero)femininity. To disparage 'fake' girls is both to position the self as 'respectable' in comparison and to risk being seen as envious of those perceived to have more 'erotic capital'. Navigating these contradictions may be particularly onerous for working class young women for whom appearance may be a particularly important resource but who are also more likely to be pathologized as 'sexually aggressive' and morally suspect (Skeggs, 2005). In addition, by virtue of their association with vanity and superficiality 'beauty girls' may be particularly vulnerable to these disparaging discourses:

….people say… “Beauty girl’s-oh they’re all fake; they all love themselves’, but we don’t think that because obviously we’re all beauty girls (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

As Ringrose (2008) suggests, “classed discourses set up painful, contradictory dynamics” (ibid: 2008:43) and the vehemence with which some participants invoke the discourses of ‘slut’ and ‘fake’ to make distinctions between themselves and other girls/women who are not ‘getting it right’ may well emerge from these.

Embodying ‘the look’

‘Getting it right’, if this is ever possible, requires constant self- monitoring and vigilance to the nuances and contradictions involved in the discourses and practices of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ femininities. However, whilst it may be the case that the beauty therapy students have to negotiate the same minefield of contradictions as other young women, they are also subject to the disciplines of beauty culture in a way that other young women are not. This has a number of implications, particularly in relation to how the courses affect students’ perceptions of other girls/women and their feelings about their own appearance. In terms of the former, several students talked about developing a more critical gaze because of their courses:

..it's making me really look at people a lot more, and be a lot more picky about appearances…as soon as someone comes on the telly you look at her makeup… and her hair and her face and spots… not… in a bad way, like I judge people, just how I can help them and stuff like that… I think it's just something that I'll have forever now, that I have been made to look at the length of people's eyebrows and the shape of their face and stuff like that… I've been trained to do it (Emma, Level 2, College B).

Whilst Emma legitimizes her surveillance of others as a benign 'professional' tool with which to 'help' people, other students struggled to differentiate the more intensely critical gaze instilled by their course from the normalized, everyday surveillance girls impose on each other:

.

> ..to be honest…I do look at people more now..if their makeup doesn't look nice to me, I think to myself, 'oh, she hasn't …' I won't say to their face… well, I do say it to Cassie, or Cassie will say it to me. But, then again, what girl doesn't really bitch? But …I don't really judge people for what they look like. (Lindsey, Level 2, College B).

One salient issue here is the ambivalence around 'judging' others. Though clearly, as Emma recognizes, beauty therapy courses are designed to produce a critical gaze, the notion of 'judging' others may be felt to jar with dominant discourses of liberal individualism that inform the construction of the beauty worker as a 'therapist' who makes people 'feel better about themselves':

> You are trying to teach them not to judge people. It's not their place to judge (Marina, Tutor, College A).

The reason these statements can work without appearing to be obviously contradictory is that they are referring to moral judgments based on reading off character from appearance. In contrast, defining a 'good' or 'bad' appearance is not considered a judgment of value in the same way but a matter of the 'superior' knowledge held by a trained beauty therapist. Nevertheless, this denial of judgment functions as symbolic violence, obfuscating and legitimizing the role that beauty therapy and the beauty industry more widely play in the regulation of femininity.

Students' accounts of how their 'ways of seeing' have been changed by their courses suggest varying degrees of embeddedness in beauty therapy as a vocational identity. In the main, Level 2 students tended to have a more developed sense of how their

perceptions of others' appearance had changed, possibly in part because of their exposure to the practices of 'facial analysis' and 'corrective make-up' (discussed below). They saw themselves as being able to look at other women through the 'gaze of the beauty therapist' and were therefore able to position themselves as relatively knowledgeable and legitimate subjects of beauty culture. However, this does not mean that they no longer experience themselves as objects of an external or internalized gaze. What many accounts suggest is that the 'gaze of the beauty therapist', itself an internalized male gaze mediated by the discourses of beauty therapy, is turned back on students, imposing an additional set of appearance norms:

> I put loads [of make-up] on…two or three times a day. Well you've…got to look nice and respectable for clients. If I don't wear make-up…the clients may think "oh, she doesn't really make an effort" (Amber, Level 1, College B).

> It takes longer to get ready in the morning because I now know… what a Beauty Therapist is expected to look like (Tania, Level 2, College A).

Students who did not explicitly refer to embodying the appearance of a beauty therapist also talked about how their own daily beauty practices had changed. One recurring trope in these accounts is the 'cleanse-tone-moisturize' regime (Radnor, 1989) which is promoted by tutors and the NVQ curriculum as a foundational principle of 'correct' skin care practice. In popular beauty culture, too, 'skin care' has a particularly important status in the production of the feminine body and may be one of " the most important aspects of self scrutiny"(Bloustien, 2003: 92) amongst young women:

> …it's teached me how to kind of take care of my skin more. Because before I never used to cleanse and tone and moisturise but now….I do take more care of my skin instead of just putting makeup on and then wiping it off (Anna, Level 1, College A)

Even Alex, who expresses very little vocational investment in beauty therapy and is seen by her tutor and other students as transgressing appearance norms, sees herself as having been changed by the disciplinary regimes around skin care promoted by her course.

> …you learn about your skin and how to make it…so you get less spots…so I always, like, cleanse, tone and moisturize every morning. I do that and I never thought I would (Alex, Level 1, College B).

As Bartky notes, "[L]ike a schoolchild or prisoner, the woman mastering good skincare habits is put on a timetable" (Bartky, 2002:19). The quasi-ritual repetition of beauty practices allows their underlying meanings, and the underlying gender order to be subjectively learnt through practical and symbolic mastery of beauty practices and incorporated in habitus. For Bourdieu, the durability of a feminine habitus relies on repetition; the continual recalling of the "constraints of clothing or hairstyle" (Bourdieu, 2001:27) as psychosomatic work imposing limits on the body and subjective understandings of the world. For most students, the time and effort involved in this new regime is not understood as a burden but as a pleasurable practice which 'empowers' them to discipline their own unruly and inferiorized bodies. In the context of beauty therapy, this is a prerequisite for vocational identification and for becoming 'professional'.

In a testimonial in the standard NVQ Level 2 text book. 'Safia' a young beauty therapist talks about her initial lack of confidence in performing skin treatments on clients and the importance of continually practicing 'skin analysis'. However, her identity as a beauty therapist is ultimately legitimized through clients' perceptions of her appearance.

> I began working for a commercial company that does face mapping, where…each section is analyzed so as to get a clear picture of what's happening under the skin's surface. I did as many as I could. Gradually, clients began to say that my clear skin was a good advert for the salon…so it did slowly begin to feel

> as though I was being thought of as a genuine professional (Hiscock & Lovett, 2010:273)

The sense of 'empowerment' produced by the mastery of beauty skills could be seen as supporting Davis's suggestion that engaging in beauty practices can facilitate a woman's 'transformation' from "passive acceptance of herself as nothing but a body to the position of a subject who acts upon the world in and through her body…an embodied subject rather than an objectified body" (Davis, 1995: 113-114).

However, I would argue that whilst students are produced as subjects through the practices of their courses they cannot "avoid the entrapment of objectification" (Ibid, 1993: 113) not least because the pedagogies and practices on the beauty therapy courses make perpetual self-surveillance and surveillance of others inevitable. The beauty therapist as subject of exchange has to also position herself as an object. Tutors may be aware of the problems associated with this and may make attempts to ameliorate the potentially harmful effects on students:

> …you don't want them to start fixating…so it's hard because I have to teach them about corrective make-up and where you might put concealer…. Like someone in the class has a big nose but I made sure it was never referenced to… I do make comments….about how beautiful they are when I am doing makeup and things like that.. I do try and give them positive reinforcement (Marina, Tutor, College A).

But in spite of her best intentions, the 'positive reassurance' she offers students is one which retrenches the notion that their value resides in appearance.

Students' accounts suggest that the intense focus on appearance exacerbates the sense of being continually under self-scrutiny and the scrutiny of others. Beauty therapy , perhaps more intensely so than other forms of aesthetic labour, trains girls in what Wolkowitz, following Skeggs, sees as "'propertizing' their embodied appearance,

reminding them that ….what you look like matters more than…what you know" (Wolkowitz, 2006:83). In fact, in this context knowing and looking become conflated. For some students who have come to their courses with an already poor bodily 'self-image', the dominance of appearance as a signifier of value and the constant incitement to make bodily comparisons may well reinforce self loathing and exacerbate 'body hatred' (Frost, 2001).

> I thought I was going to go in there an ugly duckling and come out a swan to be honest….. but it hasn't really come out the way that I thought….I don't feel confident within myself…I look at myself in the mirror and think "you're disgusting" (Jenna, Level 1, College A).

> I'm the biggest person there. I've got so upset and stuff about when…we have to practice on each other…especially because there's… pretty girls in there… you just feel like you're the odd-one-out.. it's made it worse. It has really made it worse (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

Whilst their courses have intensified the anguish these students feel in relation to their appearance, it also seems to have precipitated a more critical understanding of the pressures to 'be beautiful', particularly in terms of how they bear down on beauty students. This is suggested in Kelly's perception of the uniform, cited earlier, and in Jenna's anger about the pressures to conform:

> ….being a beauty therapist you feel like you got standards to live to. Like… you've gotta dress in these certain clothes. Why can't you just go to a bloody charity shop and get your clothes? But you got to have a designer label to … be the best person or have your makeup done or fake hair, you know? You've got to be a completely different person to who you are (Jenna, Level 1, College A).

Some students, however, talk about experiencing an increased sense of confidence in their appearance. Whilst this may be associated with developing a sense of the self as a

‘skilled individual’, it is also connected to acquiring the means to ‘improve’ appearance, as suggested in students narratives about their own ‘skin care’ regimes. However, students’ accounts are often characterized by ambivalence.

> ..it does make me feel good about myself because now I know how to look after myself… how to look after my skin and how to apply make-up…. But in other ways it's not so good because…if you haven't got the perfect skin, you know someone's looking and will be saying, “oh have you seen that?.. Especially when your teacher's got something to say about it (Tania, Level 2, College A)

One student related her enhanced confidence to developing a more critical reading of idealized constructions of femininity, implying that she no longer feels the need to measure herself against media created images.

> I think I’m a more confident person. I used to be…really shy but I think [the course] has changed my view on things really…you realize that the girls in the magazines are actually airbrushed. So obviously now I think there is…no such thing as a perfect girl (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

However, an awareness of the manipulative intentions behind ‘airbrushing’ is not in itself sufficient to spark a more radical rejection of beauty culture which defines the objective limits of beauty therapy training and thus the ‘sense of limits’ students are legitimately able to have about their own embodiment. ‘Airbrushed’ beauty, like ‘fake’ beauty, is counterposed against the notion of ‘natural’ or ‘real’ beauty’. In positioning herself against the former, Abigail embraces a bodily habitus which is more in line with the ‘expert’ position of the beauty therapist. The femininity she aspires to resolves the tension between narcissistic ‘care of the self’ and ‘care of others’ through a disposition to aesthetic and emotional labour.

> I think now that I take more care of myself as what I would have done... And I feel like… I can go out and help people to… feel better about themselves…like enhancing what people have got (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

'Professional' and everyday beauty practices in producing 'the look': A Question of Skills

Although nearly all the students routinely engaged in beauty practices before starting their courses, the process of habitus change is partly informed by the distinctions made between the lay skills and knowledge they bring to their courses and those associated with 'professional' beauty practices. However, a closer examination of how these distinctions are conceptualized raises a number of questions about the hidden assumptions underpinning 'professional' practices, and about the status of 'professional' beauty skills and whether they should be validated as specialist skills at all (Black, 2004).

The notion that there are correct ('professional') and incorrect (lay) technical skills and knowledge in the practice of beauty obscures the gendered, classed and racialized aesthetic judgments which underpin beauty therapy knowledge. Nowhere is this more evident than in the concepts and practices of 'facial analysis' and 'corrective makeup' to which Level 2 students are introduced. These practices are part of the stock in trade of the beauty therapist and require students to learn how to assess their own and others' facial shape and features, to identify "facial problem areas" (Hiscock &Lovett, 2010: 333), and to use 'remedial cosmetics', together with treatments such as hair removal or eyebrow shaping, to enhance 'desirable' 'features and camouflage or de-emphasize 'undesirable' ones. Whilst tutors and standard text books emphasize the importance of producing an appearance which is 'appropriate' for a client's age, 'ethnic group' and 'personal preference' (Ibid, 2010) the knowledge on which these practices are based are underpinned by a set of class and race inflected assumptions about beauty.

Smooth, hairless skin, an ‘oval face’, wide eyes, slim neck, symmetrical and full (but not thick) lips, a small (but not too short, thin or wide) nose, and an absence of ‘blemishes’ including freckles and moles (Ibid, 2010) define the standards against which ‘problems’ are identified and ‘corrected’. Assumptions about what constitutes an attractive face are legitimized and naturalized through these discourses and through technical claims about ‘correct’ techniques and practices (Gimlin, 2002). These normalizing judgments are elevated to the status of fact in student accounts:

> We’ve just done highlighters and shaders…..you want to make an oval shaped face with highlighters and shaders. Oval is the normal shape for a face (Leila, Level 2, College A).

They are also used by tutors as the basis of making distinctions between professional skills and knowledge and those commonly used by students.

> …black eyeliner on the inner rim of the eyes.…or very heavy black eyeliner.….and that’s such a big no- no…They don’t grasp it, you say, “you mustn’t do that because it makes the eyes look smaller” (Sally, Tutor, College B).

Gimlin argues that such distinctions are necessary for beauty workers to be able to claim a ‘professional’ standing and to “nullify status differences between themselves and their clients” (Gimlin, 2002:27). In the context of beauty therapy courses, they serve to create and regulate boundaries between ‘experts’ (tutors) and ‘novices’ (students). However, the case made by tutors for there being clear differences between ‘professional’ and lay skills in the beauty practices taught on the Level 1 and 2 courses is often less than convincing:

> ….they've got to learn how to hold the bottle in a certain way, how to apply it correctly ….they sometimes find it quite hard to raise themselves up to the standards that are expected (Carol, Tutor, College B).

> They can put makeup on themselves but they can't do it on somebody else…there's no difference to paint your nails… or to hold somebody's nail and paint it …... but if it's somebody else's hand who they know is paying for the treatment.… all of a sudden they freak out… it's all mental. So, no, none of them have any technical skills. (Karen, Tutor, College A).

Here, the difference between 'professional' and lay practices appears to be less a matter of technical skill and more a matter of mastering the dispositions necessary for performing intimate body work in a commercialized context. The way in which tutors struggle to define a substantial material difference between professional and lay skills calls into question the former's elevation above the everyday skills acquired, to greater or lesser extents, "in the very process of growing up female" (Black, 2004:82). As discussed in chapter three, the naturalization of beauty skills not only prevents their conversion "into any form of recognized capital" (Black, 2004:81) for most women in most situations but also undermines beauty therapists' claims to a professional status on the grounds of those skills.

It could be argued that this simply reflects the more general naturalization of women's labour which contributes to the routine de-skilling and low pay associated with most forms of traditionally female work and newer forms of 'feminized' service work. This may be most pronounced in what England et al (1992) call 'nurturant work' which includes varieties of face-to-face work with clients, patients or customers. Given its association with emotional labour and 'wellbeing', beauty therapy may not be out of place in this category. England et al (2002) consider that the relative low pay of caring labour constitutes a social "equity problem" not just because it contributes to the gender pay gap but because it may lead to the undersupply of labour which produces critical social benefits. Caring labour is an investment in the capabilities of recipients making them "more able to do things that increase their own and others' wellbeing" (Ibid, 2002:469). However, whilst the skills involved in paid childcare, nursing or social work may have a claim to producing these social goods, it is questionable whether the "equity problem" of beauty therapy should be located predominantly in its low pay and skill

shortages, or in its role in reproducing heteronormative femininity and gendered and classed power relations[70]. Of course, girls and women often learn and use beauty skills without the 'expert' guidance of beauty therapists. If the process of learning these practices is intrinsic to the ways in which girls come to embody heteronormative femininity and thus the social relations of domination, the elevation of specialist beauty skills acts as a form of symbolic violence, legitimizing the beauty industry and entrenching the invisibility of the gendered relations of domination promoted and embodied through these practices. As Black suggests, drawing a parallel with Jeffreys' arguments against the notion of 'specialist skills' in prostitution, the 'professionalizing' of beauty skills can be seen as reinforcing "women's association with a demeaning and ultimately harmful industry" (Black, 2004:81).

Conclusion

Most students enter their courses with what could be described as a 'feel for the game' of beauty though not, in the main, with dispositions (or pre-dispositions) inclined towards the emotional demands of vocational beauty therapy. Those with the most cultural capital at their disposal from family background, education or work, and who saw themselves as making 'positive' decisions to become beauty therapists, adapted more readily and enthusiastically to working with clients and dealing with their demands. However, students with fewer resources, often those who were initially most ambivalent about the course, also develop, to greater or lesser extents, more vocationally embedded identities or at least identities more embedded in the rituals of beauty. Habitus change is brought about through several mechanisms discursively connected through the notion of professionalism which acts as a powerful but hidden curriculum beneath the official curriculum of 'skills' and knowledge. Students learn that behaving in a 'professional' manner, as it is narrowly defined in this context, leads to the validation of their skills. From being simply 'what every girls knows', beauty skills become a form

[70] I am not suggesting that care work does not reproduce gendered and classed relations- it clearly does. However, see chapter two for a discussion of care work and training in comparison to beauty therapy.

of symbolic capital if only in the local context of the beauty salon or in local hierarchies of corporal capital. They become the means through which students can experience themselves as successful, caring people with abilities that are 'needed' and valued by others. They also develop vocational dispositions for beauty therapy by 'getting used' to practices that initially caused ambivalence or distress. In the case of bikini waxing, the discourse of 'beauty as wellbeing' is likely to be conducive in helping them dissociate from the sexual implications of this practice and the emotional tensions it can generate. Predispositions to 'doing looks' are an important prerequisite for making these transitions but the courses also required students to work on their bodies and feelings "in order to learn to labour appropriately" (Colley, 2006:22). In the main, even those students who initially had very little investment in the course or in emotional labour came to identify with the gendered, classed and racialized meanings underpinning the notion of a 'professional' body - looking 'respectable', cultivating a feminine but not 'overtly sexualized' or 'fake' appearance, internalizing the quasi-rituals of skin care. The accounts of Level 2 students mostly suggested an acceptance of the normalizing assumptions entailed in 'facial analysis' and 'corrective treatments'. Although there was ambivalence about the intensified self-monitoring and monitoring of others that these practices precipitated, some students saw this as an inevitable and even positive outcome of their training as beauty therapists and it was these participants who most obviously exhibited an appropriate vocational habitus, as defined by tutors. The value that other students' accorded to their newly acquired skills and knowledge often remained centered on their own bodies and framed in terms of being 'empowered' to "look after" themselves better . In both cases, though at different levels, students developed a more embedded 'feel for the game' of beauty therapy, and a habitus which was, to greater or lesser extents, in line with the field.

One of the underlying elements of this habitus seems to be a sense of oneself as a subject of beauty culture; someone now knows how to work on her body in order to defend herself against the threat of disparaging judgments, and, ideally, to produce an appearance and deportment appropriate for the aesthetic and emotional labour of beauty therapy. The subject of beauty culture is also someone whose knowledge

licenses her to make judgments about other women's appearance under the rubric of care. This is partly what students mean when they talk about becoming 'more confident' and what Davis means when she argues that beauty practices empower women to 'transcend objectification'. However, as I have argued in this chapter, the subject positions that beauty therapy legitimizes are always premised on female objectification. In this sense, learning to be a beauty therapist involves not just emotional and aesthetic labour but also, contrary to Black's claim, sexualized labour on their own bodies and those of other women. Feeling empowered is not the same as 'being' empowered. However, the feeling of empowerment is tremendously important because it is a subjective vehicle through which symbolic violence works to integrate habitus into the values of beauty therapy. If this is the case, then those students for whom the course has reinforced the misery and self-loathing connected to appearance, and who feel less 'empowered' by their experiences, may be in the best position to make a break with doxa, as suggested by their critical insights into inequities of gender and beauty culture. However, as Bourdieu (2010) argues, critique is always limited by objective conditions. The lack of other viable options may well keep such students on beauty therapy courses in which the normative discourses of beauty, wellbeing, care , professionalism and skills contain or drown out the possibility of alternative, critical ways of understanding beauty practices.

Chapter Ten
Producing the Beauty Girl through a Chronology of Violence

In the preceding three chapters I indicated some of the ways in which forms of symbolic violence are implicated in students' initial 'choice' to enroll on a beauty course, in tutors' definitions and classifications of students and their potentials, and in students' experience of the pedagogies and practices of beauty therapy training. In this chapter I draw on the ideas discussed in chapter five in order to focus in more detail on how the trajectories of students' have been shaped by symbolic violence "embedded in the routines of everyday lives" (Morgan & Bjorkert, 2006:441), and the ways in which this hidden form of domination might intersect with economic and structural violence (Bourgois, 2001, 2004; Galtung, 1975) and 'everyday' interpersonal violence (Scheper-Hughes, 1996, 2004) in the producing the 'beauty girl' and the inequalities and disadvantages she faces.

In this chapter, I focus on four contexts in which the lives of beauty girls have been shaped by the operation of violence. These have been chosen because they seem to most vividly exemplify the operation of symbolic violence or of symbolic violence in interaction with other forms of violence. The examples also illustrate a 'chronology of violence' in shaping the childhood and school experiences of students, their post-16 choices, their engagement with appearance practices and their experiences on their courses.

Symbolic violence and emotion in the process of becoming a 'girly-girl'

As I discuss in chapter seven, whilst most students' decisions to enroll on their courses was connected to the paucity of other viable options, beauty therapy was also a "choosable identity" that fell "within their horizons for action" (Colley et al, 2003:486). Both gendered and classed positions and dispositions shaped their 'choices'. Beauty therapy was choosable in part because 'doing beauty' was already an important part of their lives and identities. For instance, all but one student (Alex) said that from around the age of 6 or 7 they had 'played with' cosmetics specifically designed for children.

> It [beauty kit] just had a little head. It had like a makeup thing, and hair stuff (laughs). I just used to put it everywhere. I used to put lipstick on their [friends'] eyes, and lipstick on their cheeks. It used to be fun (Amber, Level 1, College B)

> ….they smell really nice, like you want to eat it [laughs]… I always remember that. Like you get the little lip glosses and stuff and you carry it round in your little bag (Kelly, Level 2, College B)

These accounts emphasize play and 'innocence' in a way that resonates with the discourses employed by cosmetics companies to market beauty products to children (Jeffreys, 2005), but also invoke the sensuous pleasure in touching, smelling and owning these 'toys'. Sheila Jeffreys rightly argues that the promotion of cosmetics to children as a form of play "will create the 'choices' of adult women" and is therefore a key element in the process of inculcating femininity and sexual difference. On this view, beauty practices are part of a pedagogy and curriculum of femininity, a 'habit forming force' (Panosky, cited in Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:34) which naturalizes gender through repetition and internalization. Jeffreys' view of the long, painful haul towards adult femininity also emphasizes the repression of an earlier, less gendered condition. Whilst the curtailment of bodily freedoms, and thus social freedoms, is key to understanding the physical and symbolic violence involved in the construction of

(hetero)femininity, Jeffreys seems to underplay the way in which the inculcation of gender also produces the experience of femininity not only as 'natural' but also as potentially gratifying or 'pleasurable'. The following narrative about the centrality of appearance practices in 'growing up' suggests a more insidious operation of power and violence than is often implied by Jeffreys:

> …from about ten to fifteen I was always in tracksuits ….then as soon as I started becoming more like a girl…. growing boobs and stuff like that [I] started changing… Because…. I want to look more of a girly- girl. It changed 'cos my Nan bought me this really nice pink top…and I don't really like pink. But as soon as I put it on I really liked it and then my mood…my attitude just changed, so I just started changing my dress sense (Natalie, Level 1, College A).

Natalie interprets her changing body through normative discourses of sexual difference and her experience of this construction of 'growing up' is symbolized and confirmed by the feminine clothing she begins to wear. She experiences her body as the 'natural' basis of "becoming more like a girl" in a way that resonates with Bourdieu's claim that the symbolic ordering of sexual difference "…comes from the fact that…. it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction" (Bourdieu, 2001:23). However, what is omitted here, as in Jeffreys account, is the relationship between the socially produced body and emotion, specifically, in this instance, the pleasures associated with the production of gender. Natalie's changing 'tastes' / dispositions are described in terms of the affective language of 'mood': 'not liking' transformed into 'really liking' and the emotive resonance of the pink top with family connections and gift-giving. The sensibilities invoked by Natalie suggest that the symbolic violence that produces the feminine habitus is effective in part because it engages the individual on an affective level. These accounts resonate with Adkins' reading of Bourdieu's view of emotions as working to 'rein in' "the body to the habitus" (Adkins, 2004: 15) and with McNay's claim that emotions "are both shaped by latent social structures and also the vehicle through which invisible power dynamics are made present within immediate everyday experience" (McNay, 2004: 185).

Emotion is also a central component in students' accounts of the importance of school friendships in beginning to use make-up on a daily basis. The importance to girls of school-based friendship groups and the role such groups play in producing and policing heterogendered identities has been well documented (Renold & Allen, 2006; Walkerdine et al, 2001). In my research, the social bonds between girls were sometimes cited as a key reason for wanting to go to school when formal education held few other attractions. Conversely, being bullied and excluded from groups appeared to be one of the main reasons for disliking school. However, most accounts suggest that the desire to belong was a key factor in beginning to engage in feminine appearance practices on a more regular basis. Five of the thirteen students started wearing make-up to school during the first year of secondary education (year 7) and by year 10, all but three students were regularly wearing make-up.

> ….it was the end of year seven, beginning of year eight when my friends used to come in wearing…mascara and eye liner …and I used to sit there with no makeup on… and all my friends were saying 'do you wear makeup, do you wear make up?' and I was like 'no not really'…but then I tried it and I thought oh I look alright..so that's why I started wearing makeup (Chelsea, Level 2, College A).

> … two year's into secondary school, all my other friends just started wearing make- up and I wanted to look just as good as them so … And then, obviously, boys were involved, so you had to look good for the boys (Lindsey, Level 2, College B)

Lindsey's account makes it clear that girls' friendship groups exist in a context in which the approving gaze of boys defines 'successful' (heterosexually desirable) femininity. The ways in which this gendering process is embedded in a 'hegemonic heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990) is also reflected in the accounts of two students who did not wear make-up regularly until year 11 and who both identify the same two critical events as

precipitating a sustained engagement with heterosexualized femininity and appearance practices; a relatively 'late' physical maturation and the school prom.

> All my friends were wearing [makeup] earlier [and] had big boobs as well and I was always …putting a bit of padding down my bra… so I could… be noticed. But I never really had an interest in make-up…I think it was..when I had my prom …because I was all dressed up and I had all my make-up done and I had hair extensions and my hair was beautiful (Jenna, Level 1, College A).

> I didn't wear make-up to school…. I was flat-chested … I looked about 10… And then the Year 11 Prom come and I had …my hair cut-off in a bob, and I had a Prom dress and all the boys were like, "woah, where did them boobs come from?" And I was like, "don't pay attention to me now; you never did throughout school" (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

In these accounts, the attainment of an adult identity (being someone, 'being noticed) is synonymous with being on display in a way that exposes a paradox of femininity in which women are constituted simultaneously as subjects (individuals/persons) and as objects of the male gaze (stereotypes/non-persons). The desire to 'be noticed' also suggests a resonance between symbolic violence and Bartky's (1990) concept of psychological oppression[71], an idea which is useful in emphasizing the concrete psychic harm produced by symbolic violence in relation to women's experience of objectification as both imposed through the perceptions of others and as a state in which the objectifying gaze is internalized. This "duality in feminine consciousness" (Ibid: 38) is suggested particularly in Jaime's response to the sexualized attention of boys at the prom, behavior which can be identified on a continuum of violence as sexual harassment (Kelly, 1983). Whilst she is critical of their lack of respect and interest in

[71] Bartky essay *On Psychological Oppression* draws on Franz Fannon's work on the psychological effects of colonialism on colonized peoples to theorize the experiences of women under patriarchy, specifically the ways in which women internalize notions of female inferiority.

her as a person, their behaviour is also experienced as a confirmation of self-value[72] . However, a positive self- evaluation on this basis can only be maintained through continuous attention to appearance beyond the 'princess at the ball' moment of the prom and when this cannot be sustained the resulting feelings of inadequacy can be debilitating:

> The day [of the prom] I looked so pretty… but then I can never look like that again … I look at myself in other pictures and I think I really used to take time in doing my hair and my makeup... I just feel like…I want to feel beautiful [but]…. I feel disgusted when I look at myself in the mirror (Jenna, Level 1, College A)

The significance of the school prom as a rite of passage is suggested in other accounts in which preparing for the event included the first (and in most cases, the last) experience of visiting a beauty salon as a client. Though this was not specifically identified as a reason for enrolling on a beauty therapy course, it was talked about as a pleasurable and important biographical moment and, as such, may well have been significant in making beauty therapy attractive and 'choosable'.

> …my prom [was] the only time I've been to a beauty [salon]…I had my hair done and then had my nails and make up. It were actually really nice 'cos the people were nice and… I liked it (Amber, Level 1, College B).

The school prom can be seen as a logical extension of other forms of gendered and classed institutional violence in schools (Osler, 2006). For instance, the inclusion of beauty therapy as an 'enrichment' or assessed curriculum option may well play a part in reproducing gendered and classed post-16 choices. One student spoke about a short 'enrichment' course as a reason for becoming interested in beauty therapy:

[72] This resonates with Best's research in the US in which the idea of "having a good prom" was internalized by young women "as a means to measure their feminine self-worth and to solidify their heterosexual identities" (Best, 2005: 203). At the same time, young women's prom stories reveal their belief in the prom as a site in which boys demonstrate their respect for girls by treating them as 'ladies'.

I did a course while I was at secondary school in year 9….to learn how to give a facial, and paint nails and things like that, so.. even from school I knew that I liked doing it. (Emma, Level 2, College B).

School violence and the production of femininity

In promoting normative constructions of femininity and gender difference, schools collude in what Ringrose calls the "violent heterosexualized politics within which girls are incited to compete" (Ringrose, 2008: 34) and thus in the kinds of classed, racialized and gendered interpersonal violence which, for many of the students, was a central feature of their school experience . Five of the thirteen students said they had been 'bullied' by other girls in ways that had profoundly affected their lives whilst others referred to isolated incidents in which they had been victims of 'bullying'. Much of this aggression appeared to be in some way related to, or expressed in terms of, appearance

Both Louisa and Jenna's accounts suggests that they were subjected to sustained campaigns of verbal humiliation throughout much of their secondary schooling.

The bad… [bits of school were] … being bullied… most of my life. My self confidence went down so much because I had…mono-brows. That wasn't the only… thing….because I was overweight as well and people were like "oh yeah, she's fat". (Louisa, L1, College B).

I was always bullied. I never felt greatly about myself and it was mainly girls that got me into all the bullying, well they all bullied me, about not having my hair done or not wearing the right clothes (Jenna, Level 1, College A).

Jenna's experience culminated in an incident which seems to have been particularly significant in sedimenting her disposition towards self-loathing and distrust of others, particularly of other girls.

> This is the most horriblest thing that ever happened. I done a talent show …. and we were doing a dance… and it was a really good dance … and the people were chanting "crusty" at me because of my skin [eczema] ….and chucking stuff at me (Jenna, Level 1, College A).

In these accounts, the feeling of shame connected to inhabiting stigmatized bodies plays a powerful role in shaping identities organized around bodily appearance. For Bartky (1990), shame is an intensely gendered emotion and a consequence of 'being – in –the-world' under conditions of oppression in which women's selves/bodies are marked as inferior. However, shame is not simply a reflection of these conditions but also productive of identities. In a Foucauldian sense, it is implicated in the operation of disciplinary power over women. In order to experience shame one must have a sense of oneself as being watched (Frost, 2001). In this sense, shame is a characteristic of symbolic violence as "internalized humiliations and legitimations of inequality and hierarchy" (Bourgios, 2001). Bourdieu argues that experiencing the body with shame is a "form par excellence of the experience of the alienated body (Bourdieu, 2001:65). However, at the same time, it might be "our bodies' way of telling us that we are interested" (Probyn, 2004:239) and that we desire to be different than we are. Whilst Probyn uses shame as an example of how emotions might be catalyst for those in positions of privilege to challenge dominant social relations, this insight can also be used to understand how shame might instill an obsession with self- transformation in ways that unwittingly reproduce them. For instance, though Louisa presents her reaction to being victimized in terms of individualized resistance, her escape from the 'bullies' is predicated on her submission to their judgments and on embracing feminine appearance practices in an effort to conform to these:

> So then doing things like exercising [and] the beauty sort of stuff, made me more confident. … and it just makes me forget them and just think… yeah, it's my life (Louisa, Level 2, College B)

For many of the students being included in, or excluded from, friendship groups appears to have had an overriding importance in their school lives (Renold & Allen, 2006) and may have been a significant factor in their disengagement or self-exclusion from other aspects of school and in their low academic achievement. The affects of this may be particularly dramatic for previously 'high achieving' girls like Kelly whose place at "the top of the class" in her first secondary school, partly as a result of intense pressure from her father to 'do well', appears to have come at the considerable cost of feeling separated from her peers and suffering mental health problems which eventually lead to her hospitalization:

> I didn't have any friends or nothing. I just had to work and that's it. But I wouldn't be able to go out and stuff… I was just learning and…I couldn't, like, express myself very well (Kelly Level 2, College B).

The 'discovery' of a 'real' and 'happier' self, facilitated by moving from her father's house to her mother's, and to a new town and school in which she was able to make friends, is connected to turning her back on academic success.

> I wasn't the person I am today, so I'm glad I moved… because…I used to never talk to anybody and now I can't stop [but] I…. went a bit crazy and just didn't really bother anymore [with school work] (Kelly, 18, NVQ 2, College B).

The sense of incompatibility between academic achievement and 'happiness' may well be bound up in the dynamics of class[73] and with the contradictory subject positions into

[73] Some studies of youth transitions suggest that working class students and their parents might prioritize 'happiness' over 'success' (Bloomer et al, 2002) in response to the ways in which objective probabilities of the former and parental experience of schooling shape a 'sense of limits'. As Walkerdine at al

which 'clever' working class girls have to insert themselves (Walkerdine et al, 2001; Renold &Allen, 2006). Self-exclusion from education, like disciplinary exclusion "can very easily contribute towards longer term social exclusion" (Macrae et al, 2003: 90)[74]. However, the 'happiness' gained from prioritizing social bonds may be double edged. Whilst Kelly talks about close and valued friendships made in her new school, her social networks were also the site of a great deal of anxiety connected to her appearance, her perceived lack of feminine bodily capital, and her experience of being 'bullied'.

For other students, self-exclusion from learning or school[75] is framed as a direct consequence of interpersonal violence:

> I would get up in the morning and tell my mum I wasn't going to school and just wouldn't go. I got bullied a lot in school… so that's part of the reason I didn't like going (Lindsey, Level 2, College B).

> The first three years… was good. I think I leant things… but year ten and eleven I just went downhill…. They used to make lies up…so I used to get in trouble ... they would walk past me in the corridor and trip me up and chuck things at me, make me feel really small and…grab me and beat me up (Anna, Level 1, College A).

Anna describes being physically pushed out of the school gates in year 11 by another girl who had accused her of racism. She never returned and the school did not enter her for GCSEs.

(2001) suggest, 'happiness' might be "incontrovertibly fused with academic success" (Ibid, 2002:135) for middle class people, but this is less likely to be so for most working class families.

[74] Macrae et al (2003) are predominantly concerned with formal or informal school exclusions rather than self-exclusion. However, their arguments are also relevant to understanding exclusion in its broadest sense. They argue that dominant or 'weak' versions of the concept locate the reasons for exclusion in the behavior of individual children. By contrast, stronger' versions, such as Osler's (2006) emphasize the social processes and power relations involved in exclusion, the role of 'gatekeepers', its policy effects and its longer term social and economic impact.

[75] I use the definition of exclusion proposed by Osler (2006) to include self-exclusion (or truanting) from school and 'disaffection' or withdrawal from learning.

As discussed in chapter five, Osler suggests that such experiences are part of the institutional and interpersonal violence enmeshed in wider school processes which ultimately reproduce the structural violence of unequal access to marketable qualifications and longer term life chances. Girls' particular vulnerability to self-exclusion is, she argues, a product of institutionalized gendered discourses which make the suffering of girls in relation to verbal and psychological interpersonal violence invisible and divert resources for addressing 'disaffection' away from girls to 'underachieving boys' whose withdrawal from learning is expressed in more overtly 'disruptive' and physically violent ways. What Osler sees as the systemic violence enacted through these discourses can also be seen as symbolic violence insofar as it obscures and legitimizes gendered and classed inequalities.

Arguably, self-exclusion is a strategy used by girls who receive inadequate support against 'bullying' (Ibid, 2006). Participants who self-excluded because of interpersonal violence or other difficulties at school talked about their poor relationships with teachers who appeared to dismiss their problems and ignore their potential longer term consequences:

> …the teachers just let me [leave school], they just didn't care. They didn't write letters, didn't ring up to talk to my mum. They didn't get my mum in to talk about my career or anything like that. And I was in Year 11 so I think that was stupid of them. They just left me (Anna, Level 1, College A).

> I didn't really like school…[because of] the people..the teachers. I just didn't get along with them. They'd just shout at me for no reason. For like..talking to other people and I'd just stay there with my head on the table and they'd just come over and shout at me (Leila, level 2, College A).

In some accounts students represented their relationships with teachers as a reason for their 'disaffection' or their 'failure' to achieve:

> I was dyslexic and I had… really bad handwriting and my English teacher was really mean…because I wrote 'Louisa' and it comes up, like, LOOSER. So I wrote 'Louisa Jones', so she was like "Who's 'Looser Jones'?" and….I'm like "it says Louisa" and she's like "well write it properly!" (Louisa, Level 1, College B).

Being belittled in pedagogic interactions which "fail to recognize… [students] as persons" (Friere, 1993:37) constitutes a form of interpersonal symbolic violence which may be embedded in school cultures and contribute to "an everyday climate of incivilities" (Osler, 2006: 578) in which other forms of violence can flourish. Alongside the kinds of resistant behavior identified by Willis (1977) and Herr & Anderson(2003), this can include physical violence. That such expressions of anger or frustration run counter to the codes of normative femininity is likely to explain why Amber appeared to be the only student who had been subject to disciplinary exclusions for physical violence, in her case for assaulting a teacher and another girl. Far more common are the kinds of withdrawal from academic achievement suggested in other students' accounts in which, as discussed in chapter seven, not 'doing well' at school is represented as a personal failure or a matter of individual inclination. Jaime's account provides one of the most powerful examples of this:

> It sounds really bad because of that whole life and what-have-you learning [but] I just don't like learning so, therefore, I don't want to learn. So [in] school I just literally… bummed around – I didn't learn anything… I just think I don't have any interest, do you know what I mean?.... I'm not that kind of person (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

On one level, the way in which Jaime naturalizes her situation allows her to 'save face'. However, such individualized understandings reflect not only the symbolic violence enacted through neo-liberal discourses of the self and through the ways in which education conceals its political character (Herr & Anderson,2003; Bourdieu & Passeron,

1990), but also in the way in which an internalized sense of limits can help to channel working class girls into a narrow range of gendered vocational education and training.

Violence in the production of post-16 choices and beyond

In chapter seven I discussed students' accounts of their decisions to enroll on beauty therapy courses. Here I focus on how gendered and classed constraints on other possible options were perceived by students and some of the ways in which symbolic and other forms of violence may work to conceal, naturalize and normalize the structural power relations in which these constraints are enmeshed.

In many cases, students expressed the belief that girls and boys should not be restricted to gender-typical pathways. External constraints in the form of 'peer pressure' were often understood as a key reason for gendered occupational segregation:

> I think we should be able to do the plumbing and plastering as well and not be branded like "Oh, she obviously… I don't know how to explain it, like a butch girl or something…(Abigail, Level 2, College A).

> I think if a boy does [beauty therapy] they're seen as like, "oh, they're obviously gay". But … I'd probably be called 'gay' if I was to then go and be a fireman… but… girls can and boys can do anything they want (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

One of the most salient aspects of these accounts is the way in which gender and heterosexuality are inseparably interwoven. Contrary to Beck et al's (2006) research in which 'homophobic' taunting was seen by young people as predominantly a problem for boys who make non-traditional 'choices', the risk involved in being seen as 'gay'/ 'butch' is represented here as the major deterrent to transgressing the boundaries of gender-typical training and work. But whilst inequality in access to training and jobs is

understood as unfair to both girls and boys, the use of heteronormative discourses to regulate gendered choices is seen as a problem insofar as it stigmatizes those who transgress by threatening their assumed normative gendered identities. The implication is that a girl should be able to be a plumber or plasterer whilst still being recognized as heterosexual and feminine. Likewise, a boy should be able to be a beauty therapist without being 'terrorized' with threats to 'his masculinity'. In this sense, the discourse of equality drawn on by students is underpinned by an unspoken assumption of heterosexuality and sexual difference. Whilst the direct violence and other forms of regulation faced by young lesbian and gay people and to those who otherwise transgress heteronormativity are very real experiences (Toomey at al,2011, Epstein & Johnson, 1998), these meanings also operate as symbolic violence against those who are positioned 'inside' as well as 'outside' the boundaries of heterosexuality (Jackson. 2006) on at least two levels .

Firstly, the liberal individualist or 'equal but different' models of gender equality drawn on by students throughout their accounts disguises the way in which heterosexuality operates as an organizing structure, ordering perceptions of the social world and what is possible within it along gendered lines (Ingraham, 1994) even when inequality is being challenged. Whilst the crossing of gendered occupational barriers has become at least more thinkable, if not more possible, the taken for grantedness of (hetero)sexual difference is arguably an important factor in understanding why attempts to "encourage a more equal balance of the sexes in heavily male or female dominated sectors" have had limited success (Beck et al, 2006a :272). Ironically, the assumption of naturalized sexual difference underlying this notion of 'gender balance' may militate against equal access and can also collapse back into gender normative prescriptions:

> I just don't think it's right for girls to do mechanics or stuff like that. It's weird. I wouldn't like to do it… It's more of a man's course than a girl's course. You can't imagine a girl like fixing cars- horrible!…Girls are more fragile than men to be doing mechanics (Anna, Level 1, College A).

Secondly, students' tendency to see girls and boys as equally disadvantaged by gender stereotyping implies an equivalence that obfuscates the asymmetry of gendered 'choices'. The jobs alluded to in the above quotations follow the pattern of inequalities in status and pay accorded to 'men's work' and 'women's work', and these inequalities are inextricably tied to broader power relations between men and women. Both the exclusion of women from 'men's jobs' and the social and cultural factors that deter men from 'women's jobs' can be understood in terms of the policing of occupational and other boundaries against threats to masculine power. As Segal suggests, men have collectively attempted to exclude women from jobs and other social spaces constructed as male in order to "to affirm mastery over those they definitively exclude" [and] to preserve the category of manhood" (Segal, 1999:169). At the same time, this necessitates a "continual and ubiquitous policing of any "effeminate" deviance" (Ibid, 1999:157), including that associated with men doing jobs like beauty therapy.

It is not hard to see why traditionally male manual occupations which, as Bourdieu puts it, "owe much if not all of their value…to [the] image of manliness" (2001: 96)[76], might seem to be no -go zones for young women. This can be understood as a product of the dialectic between the symbolic violence of (hetero)gender which produces a 'sense of limits' through which women exclude themselves, and the structural violence pertaining to the 'objective limits' inherent in the organizational structure and culture of male dominated jobs and training. Echoing Bloomer et al's (2002) research in which girls saw male training areas of FE colleges as 'scary', 'non-girl' spaces, some of the beauty girls represented 'boys' courses or courses in which boys outnumber girls as hostile territory

> If it was me [doing car mechanics] I would be ... nervous…. Because people think it's a boys subject don't they?...there would be a lot of boys doing it and

[76] As Cockburn (1983), amongst others, has argued, this is an image which is central to the construction and embodiment of working class masculinities in industrial jobs, an image threatened by the decline of heavy industry but which may continue as "class -based survival strategies amongst unemployed men" (Charlesworth, 2000, cited in Walkerdine, 2001:66) or in masculinized activities such as boxing and bodybuilding (Walkerdine, 2001).

> they'll think girls won't know anything about cars. And like, if someone asked me a question and I got the answer wrong and like they'd be laughing (Chelsea, Level 2, College A)

Chelsea's perception of the precarious position of girls on 'boys courses' suggests how the symbolic violence of hierarchical gender binaries place women in a double bind because their gender is not congruent with the work and knowledge associated with male dominated occupations (Dennissen, 2010). In this context, girls are expected to act in a gender appropriate way (to 'get the answer wrong') whilst also being held responsible for being able to produce a masculine performance of work ('knowing about cars'). The cost of getting it wrong, in Chelsea's view, would be the shame of public humiliation meted out to those who are othered by hegemonic masculine norms. However, there may also be costs attached to 'getting it right' insofar as masculine vocational dispositions are not profitable as cultural capital for women in the same way as they are for men because women who overstep occupational boundaries "carry with them the trait of femaleness by the existence of the perceived biological body" (McCall, 1992: 850). These constraints inform decisions about future training and employment. However, some students were less accepting of exclusion:

> They should have a girls class in…building work or something…Because then you won't get the hassle from the boys (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

Abigail may not have been aware of feminist projects dedicated to providing women-only construction and related manual trades courses. However, her understanding that girls may be excluded from these occupational areas because of 'hassle' from boys/men may hint at the threat of sexual harassment , a significant issue for Abigail who had left her job as a legal secretary after being harassed by one of the solicitors. Whilst sexual harassment may be used as means of protecting male occupational territories (McKinnon, 1979; Stanko, 1988; Chamberlain et al, 2008), some research on gender inequality in vocational education in the UK and US identifies it as a significant

obstacle to women's participation in training for male dominated occupations (Eardley & Manvell, 2006).

There was no obvious indication that specific concerns about sexual harassment had informed the decisions of the three students (Kelly, Lindsey and Leila) who had previously considered training in areas dominated by boys/men. However, in Kelly's case, a long cherished ambition of becoming a chef was derailed by her 'discovery' that professional cookery is masculine territory in which her own 'feminine' dispositions, might be 'out of place' or in which girls might be disadvantaged, vulnerable or subject to male power in unspecified ways:

> I was really put off being a Chef… watching Gordon Ramsay … I was watching all those cooking programmes because I've wanted to be a cook since I was little… I'm a good cook ….And in Catering they're all boys– there's hardly any girls so I would have felt lost…. I've always thought…boys don't like cooking.
>
> *Maybe Gordon Ramsay puts you off, but it turns them on?*
>
> Yeah, they want to have power don't they?

Kelly's fear of 'feeling lost' on a predominantly male catering course is accompanied by a sense of outrage at her exclusion and a very conscious rejection of men's 'claim' to the skills which she had previously seen as coherent with her own feminized identity. She clearly does not simply accept men's dominance in this sphere as legitimate. Indeed, she displays the critical insight of someone who recognizes her exclusion from privilege (McNay, 2000). However, I would argue that because her understanding of gendered power relations in relation to professional cookery is contained within doxic assumptions of natural (hetero)sexual difference, and because she sees her own skills as feminine, she is obliged to position herself as an outsider. Thus the potential for resistance suggested in Kelly's account is crushed by the weight of symbolic violence

which imposes a sense of limits, reinforced by her awareness of the precarious, even dangerous, position of women in male spaces[77]

Kelly's response to finding out that catering is a 'boys course' also raises questions about the shifting terms of symbolic violence producing femininity and masculinity as "constantly transformable act[s]" (Skeggs, 2004:24). In this context, her sense of being excluded can be seen in relation to contemporary shifts in masculinity in which cooking in a variety of contexts has been reconstructed as a 'manly practice' (Hollows, 2003)[78]. Whilst this does not displace its identification with feminine domesticity, it may well further exacerbate the difficulty women have in capitalizing on culinary skills defined, like beauty skills, as immanently feminine, whilst enhancing men's ability to accrue capital (Adkins &Lury, 1999) through this kind of work.

This situation is not dissimilar to men's 'infiltration' of other jobs traditionally constructed as female-only. Cross and Bagilhole (2002) argue that when men enter occupations identified with women they adapt or reconstruct masculinity in ways that reproduce gender advantage regardless of their numbers in any particular occupation. Whilst theorists of individualization valorize the reflexive, self- inventing individual cut loose from traditional structures of gender and class, it may be those in positions of privilege in relation to these structures who are most able transgress and to do so in ways that maintain that privilege (Adkins, 2002; Connell, 1995; Bourdieu, 2001). Whilst it is possible for girls to consider entering male dominated areas, the logic of hierarchical (hetero)gender division means that they either do so on unequal terms or, as is more

[77] Indeed, there is some empirical evidence that sexualized intimidation or other abusive work practices in the hospitality industry may function to discourage women from "'invading' the 'male turf' of restaurant kitchens" (Hall, 1993: 457; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008).

[78] The traditional gendered division which poses the "mundane [female] cook" against the "celebrated"...male chef (Gough, 2007:333) resonates with more recent media representations in which cooking has been constructed either as a 'hyper-masculine' professional practice, as is the case in Gordon Ramsay's television shows (Hollows, 2003), or as a 'male lifestyle activity' which, according to Hollows, amalgamates the figures of 'the new man' of the 1980s with the 'new lad' of the 1990s to reconceptualize domestic cooking as a 'cool' masculine leisure practice, as in the case of Jamie Oliver's 1999 TV series, *The Naked Chef*. Whilst cooking as routine domestic labour continues to be identified as feminine, the discursive masculinization of domestic cookery as leisure and aspirant lifestyle activity, together the masculine construction of the restaurant chef, may well be a key factor in the increasing numbers of men entering skilled employment as chefs and cooks over the last decade.

likely to be the case, end up excluding themselves in one way or another from, “the courses or careers from which they are anyway excluded” (Bourdieu, 2001: 95).

In the cases of the other students who had considered ‘male’ occupations, the derailment of their interests in car mechanics and engineering (Leila) and becoming an army paramedic or painter and decorator (Lindsey) was explained through oblique references to ‘changing interests’ (though in Lindsey’s case, fear of leaving home was also stated as a reason for deciding not to join the army). Such changes, however, take place against a back drop of normative gender expectations filtered, in part, through the regulation of (hetero)femininity in families, education and in girls’ friendship groups which may well displace earlier aspirations. Leila’s reference to literally ‘forgetting’ her earlier interests may be indicative of the temporary or arbitrary nature of decision making for the ‘undecided’ (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). However, it may also be suggestive of (and suggest a challenge to) Bourdieu’s understanding of the unconscious processes of misrecognition as an “amnesia of genesis exerted through conditions of existence…..[which] implies the forgetting of acquisition, the illusion of innateness” (Bourdieu, 1977:50)

> I wanted to do like, engineering and learn about cars
>
> *What stopped you?*
>
> I dunno… my brothers used to…chat about cars and that and I used to just sit there and listen to them
>
> *When you were making [post-16] choices did you think about that?*
>
> No, I’d forgotten about it by then (Leila, Level 2, College A)

In this case, the forgetfulness of history does not specifically suggest misrecognition of the social inculcation of gendered choices. Rather, recalling Jeffreys’ (2005)

understanding of gender socialization, self-exclusion is produced here by forgetting a 'self' for whom possibilities outside of normative femininity were thinkable. Leila's recollection of an 'earlier self' perhaps suggests that the origins of gendered dispositions are not always beyond the reach of consciousness and therefore not always durable in the way that Bourdieu suggests. At least partial recovery of the historical production of sex/gender is possible on a cognitive level even for those without access to the privileged tools of reflexive sociology. The potential in using such personal recollections to denaturalize and politicize gender relations is precisely the epistemological basis of feminist conscious raising (McKinnon, 1997). Whilst Bourdieu dismisses this as a misrecognition of the nature of symbolic violence as "mystified consciousness" rather than "dispositions attuned to the structure of domination" (Bourdieu, 2001:43), the fact that students can both 'forget' and remember 'earlier selves', and denounce inequality and acquiesce to it, suggests that whilst symbolic violence is a powerful mechanism in the manufacturing of consent it does not expunge ambivalence or always close off the possibility of resistance. As Skeggs argues, "the ubiquitous reinforcement of femininity on a daily basis should alert us to the fact that it cannot be purely performative, pre-reflexive or unconscious" (Skeggs, 2004a: 25). This suggests that the effectiveness of symbolic violence relies on the continual repetition of dominant discourses and practices which drown out other possibilities. The embodiment of femininity through the routines of appearance practices, as discussed above and in chapter nine, is clearly a key example of this. Another, perhaps more subtle, mechanism in the reproduction of gendered and classed dispositions through educational and job/career 'choices' is the discourse of 'learning styles'.

Symbolic violence in the construction of learning identities: The case of 'learning styles'

In chapter seven I discussed some of the gendered and classed constraints shaping students' learning identities and 'horizons for action' and the ways in which these were invisibilized behind discourses of personal choice and individual inclination. However, one particular discourse not discussed in that chapter, that of 'learning styles', deserves

attention because of its ubiquity in participants' accounts and because it appears to be a significant factor both in shaping learning identities and in concealing the social and cultural conditions of their construction. As discussed in chapter two, the idea of 'learning styles' as individual traits, measurable through various types of diagnostic instruments, has "gained unquestioned status" (Reynolds, 1997: 117) in schools and vocational education as a basis for developing 'inclusive' classroom pedagogies.

Many students invoked the idea of being a 'hands-on' or 'practical' learner as one reason for 'choosing' beauty therapy or as an explanation for liking the practical over the 'theoretical' or written aspects of the course. This was talked about in a way that suggested a familiarity with the discourse of learning styles.

> Media [studies] was good. It's more practical, I'm more into practical things…I'm good with like hands-on things (Jaime, Level 2, College A)

> I only liked the hands-on side of science…But I didn't like the like theory side of it; ..The easiest bits [of the beauty therapy course] are practicals… but the hard bit is theory….it just goes one ear and out of the other (Lindsey, Level 2, College B)

All students were required to complete a learning styles questionnaire as part of the pre-course assessment and selection procedure, although I was unable to obtain records for the outcome of these tests for some students. In both colleges, the diagnostic test appears to have been based on the VARK index (see chapter two). Although the tests appear to be extremely crude, with the 'diagnosis' based on the highest scoring category within as little as one point, most students for whom a score was available were deemed to be either visual or kinesthetic learners.

A number of researchers (see Rogers, 2009) have argued that the technology of learning styles in delivery and assessment is effective in improving learning when students are aware of "their different learning style preferences" and hence "what works

best for them" (Ibid: 15). In other words, a student's individual 'learning style' has to be accepted, internalized, and used reflexively in order for it improve learning and achievement. This, however, may have very different implications for students depending on gender and class positioning and level and type of course. The subjects of Rogers' study were undergraduate science and medical students and students currently on Access to HE courses. Whilst these students "reported positive changes in their performance as a result of their participation in the study" (Ibid, 2009: 18) it is not necessarily the case that underachieving school pupils or students on lower- level vocational courses would experience the same positive effects, particularly if the idea of learning styles is presented and understood in simplistic and unnuanced ways which assume, as seems to be the case here, that learning from hands-on experience precludes conceptual or theoretical thought. In fact, for beauty therapy students who define themselves as 'practical learners', the discourse of learning styles may actually consolidate gendered and classed educational disadvantage. For a start, whilst being a 'hands-on' or 'visual' learner may be seen as reflecting dispositions suited to the practical and aesthetic aspects of beauty therapy, a learning identity based on such reified 'traits' may lead to a sense of inevitability or 'immanent necessity' (Bourdieu, 1990) of the fit between self and a particular vocational pathway, or a vocational rather than academic pathway. This essentialized learning identity may well preclude other possible options which are felt to conflict with the internalized 'learning style' and thus block access to more 'valuable' forms of educational capital. The sense, for example, of simply not being able to write or to think in conceptual ways characterizes many of the students' 'learning identities'. For instance;

> I put more effort into the practical because it's more important to me….
> because I'm, like, more hands on than using my brain (Anna, Level 1, College A).

Perceptions of beauty therapy students as 'practical' rather than 'academic' learners are also reflected in tutors' accounts:

> …most of our students are practical people and that's why they pick this type of course…only very rarely do you hit someone that cannot pick up the practical... so for me the practical skills are actually the easy things to teach them. It's the academic skills that 99 per cent of them struggle with (Marina, Tutor, College A)

These perceptions were also implicated in tutors' approach to teaching anatomy and physiology (A&P) which was considered to be the most theoretical and scientific aspect of the course. Though they attempted to render it as palatable as possible by integrating or 'hiding' theory in practical activities, time was also set aside in separate sessions to teach basic knowledge about bones, muscles and organs and their relevance to beauty practices. Whilst some theorists of science education might argue that contextualizing science in beauty practices should encourage girls' interests[79] there is little indication that this was the case for the participants in this study. Most students said they found A& P the most difficult and boring aspect of the course. However, this may be as much to do with how theory is defined in this context and with how it is taught, as with the kind of anti- theory/science dispositions which students brought to their courses. When tutors referred to 'theory' they were often talking about students' capacity to rote- learn technical terms, to be able to list environmental or dietary effects on skin and the effects and contraindications for beauty products, and to be able to reproduce this knowledge in multiple choice or one-line answer. Students' lack of understanding or long- term recall was often bemoaned by tutors as an expression of their lack of interest or innate ability to deal with anything other than 'practical' tasks. However management decisions

[79] This is reflected in research which argues that a more 'feminine' curriculum for girls would increase their interest and participation in school science and related occupations. For instance, Kerger (2011) argues that interest in science related topics is divided along gender lines so that girls favour issues that are relational and social whilst boys are interested in technology and mechanics. Hence she suggests framing questions in the classroom in 'gender-friendly' ways so that whilst boys may respond to "how does a laser read a CD" girls will be inspired by questions like "how is a laser used in cosmetic surgery" (Ibid: 608-609) . Beyond assumptions about 'feminine interests', she does not explain how cosmetic surgery might be 'girl-friendly'. Such approaches have been criticized for excluding the intersections of gender with class, race and ethnicity and for reproducing and legitimizing essentialized binary conceptions of gender (Hughes, 2001). In addition, Volman (1995) suggests that such approaches when applied to the classroom have had little or no positive effect on girls' attainment or interest in science.

about staffing in the face of limited resources may play a key role in producing students' responses. The perception of some tutors in both colleges was that the decision to use beauty therapy staff rather than specialist science teachers (as seems to have been the usual practice in the past) was based on ensuring the cost-effectiveness of the programmes. Some tutors said that they did not feel confident teaching this aspect of the course and this was reflected in its delivery through unguided internet research, annotation of diagrams and filling- in missing words on answer sheets, particularly ironic given the construction of students as 'hand-on learners'. There was often no feedback and very little explanation or discussion of concepts or processes. When students asked more searching questions they were mostly answered in very cursory ways suggesting tutors' lack of knowledge. The poor quality of science teaching was not lost on some students:

> I prefer my theory lessons [in school] because everything is explained and we'd have a discussion about it.…If I can explain the way something works I understand it. Whereas in … [A & P sessions] it's like, "well this bone is called that. There you go". "Yeah, but why is it called that?" "Why? I don't know". So all I get is the name of it, not why it's called that (Emma, Level 2, College B).

In this context, the "shrug or…look of incomprehension" (Meier, 2002, cited in Herr & Anderson, 2003: 419) which "captures the spirit of symbolic violence" (Ibid:418) is not specifically a reflection of tutors inability to recognize students' cultural capital. Rather, tutors' lack of specialist knowledge prevented them from recognizing and developing students' desire to understand and learn. Although this created anxiety for some tutors, it was legitimized by reference to the NVQ assessment criteria which minimizes the importance of 'understanding' for passing the course. In this sense, the teaching of A & P is a site in which both tutors and students are subject to the economic violence of underfunding and the symbolic violence contained in the classed and gendered discourses of vocational education. Both of these contribute to the reproduction of the social and economic disadvantage of students and workers in low status vocational

areas whilst concealing its structural origins behind the discourse of appropriate courses for particular 'types of learners'.

Whilst the A&P modules on the beauty therapy courses could potentially broaden 'horizons for action', as suggested by Bloomer et al (2002) in relation to the academic components of other vocational courses, students' accounts suggest that in most cases they did little more than reinforce the practical-academic binary and their self-perceptions as the kind of people who cannot 'do theory'- a sense of limits which had previously informed some students' decisions to opt for beauty therapy in the first place and to reject other courses, most notably, childcare:

> Childcare's more writing and I'm not a… I'd rather do activities like, hands on things. I don't like doing science; You don't do it with Beauty [sic]….. I wanted to do a hands -on course. I can't do writing. It's so boring (Amber, Level 1, College B).

It is important to emphasize that the experience of not having the skills for academic success is a very real one and students are aware of the effects of this on their previous and present learning experiences. For working class girls, the struggle to achieve against the 'objective probabilities' of success because of lack of access to cultural, social and economic capital and subjection to the kinds of school violence discussed earlier, may well mean that "more learning is the last thing they are interested in" (Ball et al, 2000: 8) and may lead to the avoidance of training that appears to demand anything other than the 'hands-on' skills of 'safe' and familiar practices. However, I would argue that the internalized discourse of learning styles and the binary opposition of practical versus academic learning helps to provide an embodied sense of limits which make their situations appear natural and inevitable; a product of innate abilities. It is in this sense that the concept of learning styles, promoted as a tool for the democratization of learning, can be seen as a form of symbolic violence operating, together with structural/economic violence and the forms of symbolic and direct violence which

produce feminine dispositions towards ‘doing looks’, to convince these young women that beauty therapy must be ‘right for them’.

“Suffering for beauty”: the embodiment and erasure of physical and emotional pain

One of the themes in second wave feminist writing is that in the quest for beauty a woman must be prepared to suffer and, simultaneously, to discount this suffering as a small price to pay for the gain of an ideal or at least acceptably feminine body. She may also learn to tolerate, and even to ‘romanticize’, pain (Dworkin, 1972). In this section, I consider the kinds of physical and psychic suffering which participants (mainly students but with some reference to tutors) experience in relation to appearance practices within and outside the beauty therapy courses and how these may be caught up in different and interdependent forms of violence.

“When I eat…I feel fat”: cutting the body down to size

Being ‘overweight’ carries implications of moral deficiency in terms of lack of self discipline (Bartky, 2002), a particularly powerful discourse in the context of neo-liberal, post-feminist culture in which such failings are often read as signifiers of class and status (Mc Robbie, 2004) . Unsurprisingly, then, anxiety about weight and size was a key theme in students’ accounts. Six of the thirteen students identified weight or size as a particular preoccupation which had led them to engage in body altering practices in order to attain or sustain an ‘ideal’ size, though the practices varied considerably and included ‘controlled’ diet plans, uncontrolled dieting, exercise, support groups and, in one case, self-hypnosis. Both Louisa and Tania talked about starting to diet and exercise in order to lose weight as a response to disparaging comments from others. Louisa’s dieting was prompted by bullying at school. In Tania’s case, the catalyst seems to have been her ex-boyfriend’s depreciation of her appearance:

Did you lose the weight deliberately?

Through an ex-boyfriend, actually… he always used to tell me, "oh, you're fat and no one will want to be with you after me". I got depressed because of that.

Tania's experience resonates with feminist research on how psychological or verbal expressions of male violence in intimate partner relationships can impact negatively on women's health by producing feelings of shame, anxiety and diminished self-esteem (Kelly, 1988; Morgan & Bjorkert, 2006). However, it also suggests the way in which this expression of violence can operate as symbolic domination when feelings engendered by it are internalized in a way that produces complicity with the values imposed by the aggressor (bid, 2006).

Although Tania recognizes the mental suffering caused by her boyfriend's behavior, its effects on her own practices are also understood as fundamentally empowering.

I stopped eating all the crap and I used to walk about three miles a day… I just lost the weight then and a lot more people were noticing me; I was getting attention that I never had before. So, I sort of took advantage of that and I think that sort of got me more friends in school (Tania, Level 2, College A).

The immediate benefits of producing an idealized feminine body as cultural capital within friendship networks, or to attract male approval where this is deemed essential to maintaining a feminine identity, are undeniable. However, as Bordo (2003) suggests, cultural practices like dieting and exercise may also change the lived experience of the body in ways that produce or reproduce a sense of alienation; a sense of the body and its hunger as an unruly entity separate from the Self and requiring control. Whilst there was no evidence that Tania or any other student was 'clinically anorexic', Bordo's comments on the anorectic's relationship to her body are useful in understanding how dieting might reproduce a fragmented, dualistic sense of the self in which thinness represents a "triumph of the will over the body" (Ibid:147):

> These women experience hunger as an alien invader….disconnected from any normal self regulating mechanisms. Indeed, it could not possibly be so connected, for it is experienced as coming from an area outside the self (Ibid: 146)

Amber's account is possibly the most powerful expression of the way in which controlling the body through dieting might produce this sense of mind-body dualism:

> I don't like [eating] because then I feel fat…like I'm… an elephant… But it's hard, because when you're starving and haven't ate for hours, you do need something to eat…I did it at work [in a fish and chip shop] a few weeks ago….I didn't eat nothing for breakfast and then went to work and did a two hour shift…and my stomach was rumbling and I felt like I was going to faint and I just bit into a chip and chucked half of it away (Amber, Level 1, College B)

Like many women, she measured the success or otherwise of this self-mortification by comparing herself with other girls in terms of the categories provided by the fashion industry, wishing that she was a "size 8' like the other girls", rather than a 'size 10'

Whilst 'success' had so far eluded Amber, Louisa's happiness with her newly slim body remained insecure and premised on continued control for which she sought the support of her mother, who was also a dieter, and a local Weightwatchers group:

> My mum comes with me and I'm like a gold member now so she's like "oh, I don't have to go anymore" and I'm like "well, you still should"! I only go monthly now because I don't need to go to so [much] anymore .

Her continued reliance on Weightwatchers in spite of having reached what she saw as a "healthy" weight, resonates with Watts's understanding of the costs of identifying the self with willed control over an objectified body:

> …this mode of control is a peculiar example of the proverb that nothing fails like success. For the more consciousness is individualized by the success of the will, the more everything outside the individual seems to be a threat including…the uncontrolled spontaneity of one's own body….Every success in control therefore demands further success, so that the process cannot stop short of omnipotence" (Watts, 1970 cited in Bordo, 2003: 145).

The same arguments can be made in relation to exercise for weight loss, although in most cases this appeared to be harder for students to engage in than dieting. Although exercise and fitness regimes have become a de rigueur aspect of neo-liberal self production, the experience of the body as constantly under scrutiny was clearly a factor influencing some students' reluctance to engage in sport or fitness activities, for instance:

> ….I like going swimming and stuff, but I don't like the thought of going in..I think people are looking at me and.that's the reason I don't go… because I feel like the biggest one there and I just feel real paranoid (Kelly, Level 2, College B).

In these accounts, the body is experienced not simply as being disconnected from the Self but more particularly in terms of its deficiencies which, to greater or lesser extents, come to define the Self by constituting appearance as a 'master status' and stigma (Tsselon,1992). The way in which this creates a sense of limits in relation to physical activity is not only arguably detrimental to longer term health but is also suggestive of Bartky's argument that whilst women suffer alienation from the body experienced as separate from the Self, "we suffer a different from of estrangement by being too closely identified with it" (Bartky,1990:35). Young's view of the way this type of fragmentation informs the imposition and experience of sexual objectification provides a springboard for understanding how symbolic violence as 'internalized intimations of inferiority' can produce what could be seen as intrapersonal violence against the capacities of one's own body:

> Developing a sense of our bodies as beautiful objects to be gazed at and decorated requires suppressing a sense of our bodies as strong, active subjects moving out to meet the worlds' risks and confront the resistances of matter and motion (Young, 1979, cited in Bartky,1990;35).

Some focus group participants' responses to a photograph of women playing rugby may be suggestive of the way in which normative femininity informed by this sense of bodily limits may militate against activities based on such physical risk- taking and enjoyment of the body's capacity rather than its appearance, especially when activities require the crossing of traditional gender lines (Slater & Tiggermann, 2010).

> P1: I couldn't do that…running and big women and…You'd get all covered in mud.
> P2: They end up all butch and stuff don't they?
> P3: Yeah…muscley and big thighs and stuff
> P1: Yeah, a lot of women rugby players are quite mean and aggressive
> M: Has anybody ever played rugby themselves?
> Several participants: No
> P3: Apart from when we were forced to in school … they split us up into girls and boys- and you'd have to, like, tackle the other girls ..and try and hide at the back of the sports field and try and not get taken down by one of the aggressive girls.
> [laughter]
> (Focus group, Level 2, College B)

As Dworkin (1972) argues, ideologies and practices of beauty prescribe how women are able to use their bodies. Whilst some women may use sport and exercise in ways that 're-negotiate' gendered relationships to the body (Gimlin, 2002) or even resist (hetero)femininity (Shakib, 2003), the kinds of physical activities which are very often associated with 'feminine fitness', for instance aerobics, dance and cheerleading which Krahnstoever -Davison et al (2002) refer to as 'aesthetic sports', have been criticized as forms of 'body management' aimed at producing docile, self-disciplining bodies which conform to dominant definitions of femininity (Bordo, 2003). This is perhaps most overtly reflected in the promotion of pole dancing, a staple of the contemporary sex industry (Walter, 2010), as form of exercise sometimes known as 'cardio strip' (Jeffreys, 2005)[80]

The conflation of fitness, health, sex and beauty practices was underscored by an older beauty therapy student (not in the research group) who had worked as a lap and pole-dancer and was planning to start her own business organizing lingerie, beauty and keep-fit pole dancing parties. Most of younger students in the research group did not hold the kinds of cultural or economic capital to plan such an entrepreneurial future. However, the normalization of femininity as 'erotic capital' in which " the body is endorsed as a site of profit" (Coy et al, 2011) was suggested in end- of -year Level 1 focus groups in which several students agreed that lap or pole dancing would be, in one students words, "a pretty good job…. cause you get loads of money for it". Others were more cynical. For instance, one student who had considered taking a job as a lap dancer to earn money, and because of an ambition to dance professionally, recognized the harmful realities underneath its glamorization:

[80] As one UK website for pole dancing classes euphemistically puts it:

> ….unlike the boring repetitions of the gym or the uninspiring similarity of most aerobics classes, pole dancing is incredibly rewarding. As you progress, you'll find that you're able to do more and more fun things on the pole, all the time increasing your fitness and coordination…heeled shoes are required for this course (Pole Dancing School, 21. 5. 2012).

> It would be like blokes treating you like a piece of meat or something and there's lots of drugs and violence that comes with it (focus group participant, Level 1, College A).

However, when the idea of pole dancing 'in private' or in female only exercise classes was raised in one focus group, there was a general agreement that this was a good thing for girls. This was echoed in an interview with Amber whose response appears to dramatize a severely constricted sense of limits in terms of future life chances, as well as the difficulty of defining a distinction between sexual objectification and physical activity for one's own benefit.

> *If you could do absolutely anything in the world that you wanted to do, what would it be?*
>
> A pole dancer… I want to do it for exercise… to lose weight. I seen it on the telly yesterday – it looked really good for exercise. …. I wouldn't want to go in a strip club [laughs]. I just want to be a pole dancer to get exercise but I'd do it for my boyfriend (Amber, Level 1, College B).

The discourses connected the sexualization of women's exercise raises a number of interconnected issues. Firstly, they promote the idea that even when women engage in fitness activities 'for themselves' they must be subject to an internalized male gaze because the activity is also one that is designed to sexualize the body and to be performed for male sexual gratification. Secondly, Amber's perception of pole dancing appears to mirror the way in which, as discussed in chapter nine, beauty practices such as bikini waxing engaged in by women in female-only contexts are simultaneously acknowledged and denied as sexual. Thirdly, as Coy et al (2011) argue, the glamorization and 'mainstreaming' of commercial sex as a model for everyday practices of femininity constitutes a form of symbolic violence by obscuring the gendered power relations and direct forms of sexual violence which underpin it. Crucially, it also erases the economic violence which informs the involvement of women in 'sex work' (Ibid,

2011; Jeffreys, 1997). In this context, the intersection of symbolic and economic violence may explain the enthusiasm expressed by some of the focus group participants for pole dancing as a form of paid work. Lastly, the association of normalized technologies of femininity with commercialized sex may suggest some level of synchronicity between the effects of these different practices on women's lived bodies.

For instance, some of the documented effects of 'sex work', including a sense of self-disgust and body-hatred, and some of the strategies used by women in an attempt to protect themselves from feeling violated, for example, dissociation (Jeffreys, 1997) or disembodiment (Coy, 2009) , have resonances with Bartky's (1990) view of the twin expressions of feminine alienation (the body 'as me' and 'not me') which are arguably also reproduced in normalized feminine practices outside of the sex industry. In both cases, a sense of embodiment based on alienation can be understood in terms of the development of a habitus which normalizes symbolically or physically violent practices. In Coy's (1990) study one woman described her initial engagement in prostitution as "scary at first….but after a couple of weeks I'd just got used to it" (Ibid: 67). This has strong resonances with some students' experiences of 'getting used to' the more 'invasive' practices of their courses, most notably, as discussed in chapter nine, bikini waxing:

> ….I never would have done it at the beginning. But then we had to do it on each other …I was a bit nervous about it because you don't want nothing showing or anything and you're scared that you don't want everyone in you class seeing and everything. But….I just get used to it (Chelsea, Level 2, College A).

In both cases, the internalization of practices as "meaningful expressions of… identity" (Coy, 2009: 67) requires a shift in women's demarcation of boundaries which limit use of, or access to, their bodies. In the case of prostitution, this shift is more clearly a response to male entitlement of sexual access. However, in the case of beauty therapy training, whilst students are required to engage in practices that inscribe gendered violence on their bodies by marking them as sexual territory, this is obscured by the

physical absence of men, the assumed sexual benignity of the gaze of other girls/women in the training salons, and the disavowal of sexual connotations through the discourse of beauty practices as empowerment and wellbeing.

Taking pains to be beautiful: making sense of pain in the beauty training salon

References to the pain involved in producing feminized bodies are ubiquitous in feminist writing on beauty practices. Though the meaning and relevance of pain in relation to beauty is a contentious issue (Holliday & Sanchez-Taylor, 2006), the role that it plays in the embodiment of femininity is rarely subjected to sustained analysis. Most scholarly work on the experience of physical pain has been from a biomedical perspective although since the early 1990s there have been attempts to develop a sociology of pain as a challenge to the mechanistic and Cartesian dualistic model of dominant paradigms (Bendelow & Williams, 1995). Most of this research is focused on understanding the phenomenological, cultural and social aspects of pain in the context of health and illness. Nevertheless, it is useful as a starting point for investigating its meaning in the lives of beauty therapy students.

Some of the most negative feeling about beauty practices were expressed in relation to pain and discomfort as a common, if not daily, occurrence on the beauty therapy courses. At the same time, however, participants often appeared to minimize its importance through laughter and by framing it as something that 'you just get used to':

> Eyebrow waxing… really hurts and…no matter how many times I have my eyebrows done I'm still like, "Oh my God, she's [tutor] gonna punch me in the eye or something" [laughing]…And she's like "Stop making a funny face" . But I think after a while it's OK. You just kind of get used to it. (Abigail, Level 2, College A)

A key aspect of learning beauty skills is the development of dispositions for 'coping' with the pain and discomfort associated with them. Pain is represented as a rite of passage.

What is also signalled in students' accounts is that pain is not simply a physical sensation, but a social phenomenon in which, as Bendelow puts it:

> [The] Physical experience of the body is modified through the categories through which it is known….The experience of living in a…gendered body in a hierarchically gendered world must have an impact on the ways in which different forms of pain are experienced and expressed(Bendelow, 1993: 290).

In the popular rhetoric of beauty, women are often represented as uniquely stoical. This is captured by Dworkin in her assertion that in the ideology of feminine beauty "pain teaches an important lesson: no price is too great, no process too repulsive, no operation too painful for the woman who would be beautiful" (Dworkin, 1972: 115). Whilst this underscores the price women are required to pay for beauty, it also reflects a wider discourse about their greater ability to tolerate pain. In the context of cosmetic surgery, for instance, surgeons tend to see male patients (a small, but apparently increasing market) as 'difficult', less able to tolerate pain and requiring more medication to cope with it (Flowers, 1991, cited in Davis, 2002). In Bedelow's research on gender and pain perception, both male and female participants typically saw women as being physically and emotionally better able to endure pain of all types on the basis of their 'biology' or upbringing. Men in particular pointed to childbirth as "the ultimate in pain experience" (Bendelow, 1993: 287) and both men and women invoked the social injunctions against men expressing pain as a barrier to coping with it. Such perceptions are arguably rooted in the cultural association of women "with the natural world in the form of bodily (implying lower status) functions" (Ibid, 1993: 289). In this discursive context, pain constitutes an abnormal state for men but normality for women. This is dramatized in the context of beauty therapy training in which both the presence of men as students and their experiences of the pain of beauty practices is perceived as putting them in 'a state of abnormality':

> … and he [male student] was like "I don't know what you girls all complain about" and I went, "go on then Tone, right you can get your bikini line out then"

> and he went “Go on then”…he wasn’t really impressed with that but he did realize what all the screaming was about (Karen, Tutor, College A).

One salient feature of this narrative is how the ‘matey’ humour in the interaction between Karen and the male student confirms the lack of congruence between ‘maleness’ and the practice and pain of bikini waxing. Another tutor, Sally, talked about a male ex-student as ‘a good laugh’ and a ‘good sport’, attributing a kind of nobility to boys and men who ‘put up’ with practices seen as the proper and ‘natural’ province of women. Interestingly, this was the only context in which tutors mentioned the pain involved in beauty practices, possibly attesting to the way in which it is simply taken for granted in the case of female students. The same assumptions were at work in a college –wide charity event held in the student refectory at College B in which four young men volunteered to have their legs waxed by two nervous and bemused looking Level 3 beauty therapy students. A group of about twenty male students, encouraged by a female DJ/MC, cheered and egged on the ‘volunteers’ with banter in which the situation was constructed as simultaneously comically absurd and a demonstration of ‘heroism’. The MC described one of the volunteers as a “brave man….Does he know how much it’s going to hurt?”. I would argue that this performance was not about ‘suffering for beauty’, which is the proper province of women, but about the ability to ‘triumph over’ the pain associated with femininity and thus over any hint of femininity in themselves. For women, however, there is “very little that is heroic about…femininity” (Skeggs, 1997: 36). When pain and its endurance are understood as an imminent characteristic of femininity it is effectively invisibilized in the same way that skills naturalized as feminine are not recognized as capital carrying skills. Whilst some might want to read this incident as a gender disruptive or queer performance (Butler, 1990), I would argue that it actually reproduces the idea of beauty practices as essentially feminine and so reinscribes sexual difference . As MacKinnon suggests, gender reversals ultimately “affirm rather than [undermine] the standard sexual arrangement as the standard sexual arrangement” (MacKinnon, 1989:144).

According to Bendelow (1995), women's greater capacity for pain endurance may lead to their suffering being ignored by themselves and others in a way that may also have implications in terms of the infliction of pain. It is not entirely clear whether she is referring to self or other-inflicted pain, but in response to her suggestion that the issue requires further investigation I would suggest that beauty practices may be an ideal site because they allow connections to made between these gendered discourses and women's engagement in practices which are 'self-inflicted' or 'self-inflicted by proxy'. A further connection which may illuminate this, and one that is seldom made outside of radical feminism, is that between socially acceptable practices of femininity and those pathologized as 'self-harm'.

> Women voluntarily undergo culturally sanctioned procedures which are painful and physically destructive for the sake of Western beauty ideals…what is remarkable is that it is culturally tolerable for women's bodies to be objectified and destroyed…. in the service of [these] ideals and men's sexual gratification. What is not… tolerable is for women to objectify themselves and destroy their own bodies in ways that do not serve Western aesthetics (Shaw, 2002: 206).

Clearly, not all beauty practices involve the 'destruction' of body tissue. Indeed most of the practices taught on beauty therapy courses are aimed at 'preservation' as well as 'improvement' and the physical pain involved is usually short term. However, what is important in this argument is the idea that both types of practice reflect the way in which women learn to "use the cultural language of violence against themselves" (Ibid: 203) or, in Bourdieu's terms, to internalize this violence as habitus. Shaw is not claiming that beauty practices are the same as the deliberate cutting, burning or hitting of one's own body, or that they can be simply equated in terms of the intensity of the mental suffering and its consequences or the specific precipitating factors involved. However, she is suggesting that they have a common genesis "in women's experiences of relational and cultural violations, silencing and objectification" (Ibid: 192). In this sense, they are both corporeal expressions of women's responses to structural, direct and symbolic violence. In this light, it may not only be relevant that many students expressed dissatisfaction

with, or outright loathing of, their bodies, but also that one had attempted suicide and three others had been treated, or were being treated, for mental health problems which they connected to ‘low self-esteem’.

One interesting question here is the differences and similarities in how pain might be perceived in each context. Both types of practice may be understood as attempts to reduce psychological pain. In the case of self-injury, physical pain may be important as way of dissociating from previous trauma (Favazza,1996) , often including sexual abuse (Kennerley, 1996). Whilst there is no evidence in this or other studies that women actively seek pain through everyday beauty practices, dissociation or bodily- alienation may be a key linking factor. Favazza (1996) argues that many self-harmers do not report feeling pain when injuring themselves and this may relate to a “psychological chasm between body and self” (Cross, cited in Favazza, 1996:51), a possibly extreme experience of the bodily alienation which Bartky sees as a mundane condition of femininity. If the body can be perceived at a distance from the ‘self’, or as an ‘object for the self’, then its pains may become more tolerable and thus effectively invisible as suffering:

> I tried wax before and I didn’t like it. It hurt…I nearly screamed the place down. But now I’m fine so I’d get it done. Like, every time I wax my legs you won’t hear nothing from me now. I just get used to it. (Chelsea, Level 2, College A).

In Bendelow's research, the ability to endure pain is related strongly to the meanings people bring to it and the degree to which these meanings legitimate suffering. For the beauty girls’, tolerance of pain and discomfort appeared to be related to the extent to which a particular practice was perceived as yielding benefits. For example prior to starting her course, Louisa found having her eyebrows waxed a painful and frightening experience and had initially resisted it. However, her mother had insisted and she had capitulated on the basis that it would help to stop the appearance related bullying she

was experiencing at school. For others, the pain of some beauty practices is legitimated with reference to their perceived pleasurable outcomes:

> I don't really mind if it hurts…I find waxing enjoyable. It's just, like, having soft skin after. It feels really nice (Lindsey, Level 2, College B).

Whilst the short-term pain involved in practices which 'improve' appearance is eventually tolerated and effectively discounted, the suffering associated with procedures which 'worsen' appearance or have longer lasting effects, are more likely to be resented.

> …you're meant to do [facials]…. one every four to six weeks, whereas … we were doing it every Monday, Tuesday, Friday so my skin was getting so bad and [the tutor's] like, "well you've got to bring out the bad like to get the good stuff" but my face was getting spotty….I just wasn't enjoying having facials all the time (Jaime, Level 2, College A).

Students who were most ambivalent about their courses were most likely to verbalize the health risks of beauty practices and to be critical of tutors' for not protecting them against such dangers. In spite of the fact that health and safety is part of the formal curriculum and is constantly emphasized by tutors, adverse reactions to beauty products were not uncommon:

> I'm allergic to tea tree…I came out in massive big red blisters… and my teacher said oh it's got tea tree in it! [But] they put a different product in the pot.… I got sent home and I was in so much pain, and they don't think about that (Tania, Level 2, College A).

Both these accounts represent a break with doxa in that they reveal the symbolic and direct violence enacted through apparently benign discourses and practices. However, the notion that there is 'no gain without pain' ("you've got to bring out the bad like to get

the good") reassert doxic assumptions, legitimizing the potentially harmful practice of making Level 1 students have facials several times a week. Similarly, the constant emphasis on health and safety functions to obscure the potentially injurious nature of beauty products.

Pain is an ever present reality on beauty courses. On one level it is very visible. The sound of students, and occasionally their clients, in varying degrees of discomfort was part of the backdrop to activity in the training salons during my observations. Yet because it is trivialized and normalized, as well as naturalized as an imminent expression of femininity, it is simultaneously invisible most of the time. In this context, whilst some students responded critically to practices they saw as unnecessary, it is unthinkable that the pain and discomfort of beauty practices might indicate an enactment of gendered violence which is self-inflicted or inflicted by proxy. Learning to tolerate and discount pain is a hidden curriculum. It is not mentioned in the assessment criteria or learning outcomes of any of the modules but it is part of the work that students are required to perform on their bodies and emotions, not least because working on the bodies of other women will at times entail the infliction of pain. Indeed, the tensions between caring for a client and causing pain is one of the difficulties of learning to labour in the beauty salon:

> I don't like doing waxing on people because I'm scared that I'm gonna rip their skin….and then if someone bleeds…I'll be on the floor passed out because I don't like blood (Abigail, Level 2, College A).

> I get jumpy with clients 'cause I'm worried I'll hurt them..[I'm] too squeamish. I had this client and she was screaming and wouldn't…let me tweeze her hairs…and then the tutor told me off and I got crossed [on the assessment sheet] for not doing it (Leila, Level 2, College A).

Students are expected to learn techniques to minimize the risk of injury but there also seems to be an unspoken requirement for them to enact a similar kind of self-protective

detachment to that often used by nurses faced with the suffering of patients - a "dissociation from experiencing the body of the other [in which] the person-to-person relationship is objectified as a technical and functional relationship" (Crowe, 2000:966). In addition, just as the dissociative tactics used by nurses may be facilitated by the discourse of altruism (Ibid, 2000), so the quasi- therapeutic construction of beauty therapy as wellbeing acts as a symbolically violent disciplinary discourse which allows the beauty therapist to focus on the emotional 'good' she is doing for her clients and to distance herself from the pain she will inevitably inflict regardless of how proficient her skills are. However, unlike health professionals, beauty therapists may assume that women who use beauty salons already have feminine dispositions towards suffering for beauty. The absence in tutors' accounts of any reference to the physical pain experienced by clients would seem to suggest that it is simply taken for granted. Instead, what tutors focus on, as discussed in chapter nine, is the emotional suffering connected to inhabiting a deficient body in need of work and the dispositional grooming of students to empathize with and ameliorate these feelings. This is consistent with the ideological construction of beauty practices as a solution to suffering-a site of empowerment and pleasure. Suffering for beauty, whether in terms of pain, discomfort or the constant self-discipline involved in it (Bartky, 2002), is a largely unspoken secret within the dominant discourses of the beauty training salon. The embodiment of pain in beauty practices is simultaneously the embodiment of normative femininity and gendered power relations. If social injustice becomes violence when it leads to suffering, then the pain and discomfort of beauty practices and the normalization of these may represent a particular concrete manifestation of how structural, direct and symbolic violence take hold of women's bodies and how violence "inscribes the body with messages and significance" (Menjivar, 2008) that reproduce the dominant social order.

Conclusion

My intention in this chapter has been to show how the structural power relations of gender and class are expressed, experienced and reproduced through symbolic violence, and through direct interpersonal and institutional forms of violence experienced over time. Whilst structural violence, as Bourgois (2002) argues, underpins all other forms, symbolic violence is a "lynchpin that sustains power relations" (Ibid: 223) by manufacturing acquiescence. This chapter has pointed to a number of manifestations of this. Symbolic violence operates in the production of subjective limits which constrain participants' sense of who they are and who could be as learners and workers. It incites girls to embrace objectified femininity through practices and discourses which naturalize sexual difference and inculcate both pleasure and shame. It also erases the discipline, pain and discomfort of beauty practices through the inculcating a sense of bodily alienation. Whilst participants' accounts suggest numerous examples of resistance to symbolic violence, doxic assumptions are reasserted by tutors in the training salons, often through the normalizing discourses of wellbeing and professionalism. In general terms, the assumption of (hetero)sexual difference appears to be a particularly powerful mechanism in constraining resistance to gendered practices; in Bourdieu's language, it is a limiting case of symbolic violence. However, the symbolic violence involved in subjectification is effective not just because it censors counter-hegemonic ways of seeing, but also because it is backed-up and amplified by other forms of coercion.

The sometimes devastating forms of appearance-related interpersonal violence experienced by some of the participants at school generated degrees of self-loathing and shame which, unsurprisingly, produced or reinforced dispositions inclined to submit to the disciplines of beauty practices in order to 'stop the bullies', or to "be like everyone else" . In this sense, the production of an attractive feminine body is a concrete manifestation how direct and structural forms of violence are inscribed on women's bodies and embedded in subjectivity. But the effects of peer violence cannot be separated from other forms of institutionalized violence embedded in educational

cultures: in formal and informal curriculums, in the interpersonal symbolic violence expressed through teachers' incivilities toward 'underachieving' students, and in the discourses which deny recognition and support to working class girls, allowing them to withdraw from learning or to leave school because they are frightened, isolated or demoralized. For many participants, these networks of violence may well have played a key role in limiting their post-16 options and therefore in reproducing structural violence through the gendered and classed economic disadvantages they are likely to face beyond school and college.

However, students do not simply follow the leanings of a gendered habitus. Some of the beauty girls were constrained to highly gendered pathways partly because of what they knew about the dangers of being a girl in a male environment. Some were clearly aware of how male power disadvantages them and whilst none specifically mentioned physical or sexual violence in relation to their training decisions, the ambivalence of some students about their positioning as objects of the gaze suggests that they are well aware of the kinds of sexualized hostility they may have been faced with.

It may also be the case that this ambivalence partly rests on what Goldman sees as the paradoxical terrors of, on the one hand, not attracting male approval and, on the other, the threat of violence "which may accompany presentation of self as an object of desire" (Goldman, 1992, cited in Gill, 2009). In this sense the discourses of beauty may constitute a kind of terrorism which plays a role both in excluding girls from male dominated areas and in making beauty therapy an attractive proposition. Here structural violence, direct violence and symbolic violence are mutually reinforcing.

But far from providing solutions to the terrors of body dissatisfaction and objectification (Davis, 1995; Gimlin, 2001), disciplinary practices such as dieting and aesthetic exercise may be premised on, and reproduce, self -objectification through the experience of bodily alienation, arguably a case par excellence of the way in which symbolic violence works in and through bodies. Alienation, in Bartky's terms, is a condition of femininity, and it may be the basis of continuities between women's

embodied experience of gendered violence in the contexts of self-harm and the painful practices women engage in for the sake of beauty. The significance of these parallels is that they make it possible to contextualize the mundane, putatively self-chosen practices of beauty in the wider context of gendered violence. However, what also needs to be taken into account is that having arrived on their courses for reasons shaped by the interplay of structural, direct and symbolic violence, beauty therapy students do not even have a semblance of choice in whether or not to engage in beauty practices regardless of how painful or potentially harmful they are. In this sense, not even the designation of 'self-infliction by proxy' necessarily describes the types of direct violence to which students may be subject in the process of learning to be beauty therapists.

Chapter Eleven

Conclusion

In what follows, I draw together the key findings of this research in relation to the research questions discussed in chapter six, I also point to the ways in which this thesis might contribute to our knowledge of vocational education, beauty practices, and violence. I also suggest how it might signal directions for future research and briefly review some issues arising from the research process.

Findings in relation to research question 1

Narratives of choice and constraint

To greater or lesser extents, most participants accounted for their decision to enroll on a beauty therapy course through the language of choice or inclination. Whilst a minority positioned themselves as autonomous 'choosers', others struggled to locate their decisions in future oriented, reflexive choice biographies. In some cases, participants were keenly aware of the external constraints and injustices which had brought them to the beauty training salon. However, even where participants emphasized the coercive nature of post-16 decision making, becoming a beauty girl was mostly understood as the best fit possible with their identities and interests given the lack of alternatives. In this sense, beauty therapy was at least a 'choosable identity', a default position predicated on the contradictory experiences of pleasure, inadequacy and shame connected to inhabiting an objectified and inferiorized feminine body. The mechanisms of symbolic and interpersonal violence which inculcate this sense of limits also produce dispositions to 'doing looks' which may make beauty therapy seem a low risk option, something which connects to the already known and familiar. However, for some beauty girls this is not just a matter of 'calculating' the best chances of success in terms

of qualification and employment. Beauty therapy is also seen as a solution to personal suffering connected to appearance and a way of achieving successful femininity both through 'care of the self' and 'care of others'.

However, the beauty girls did not just follow the leanings of their habitus. Their choices were constrained by other objective gendered and classed limits. Most were 'losers' in the filtering and selection processes of the qualification system which left them with little tradable capital in the post-16 education market. For these students, a low level vocational route was a given but male dominated areas of training and employment were no go zones, even when they had harboured ambitions for such training or understood gendered barriers as deeply unjust. The threat of being subjected to male power and the sanctions associated with transgressing heteronormative gendered boundaries place profound restrictions on girls' trajectories making gender-typical pathways a choice of necessity. Whilst beauty therapy may have represented, for some students, a refusal of the traditional femininity associated with caring courses, the centrality of emotional labour in beauty work makes it anything but an escape from the necessity of producing a caring Self.

Findings in relation to research question 2

Expectations, skills and dispositions

When students arrive at college for their beauty therapy interviews the dispositions (or predispositions) they bring with them are already under scrutiny, evaluated by tutors against heterogendered, classed and racialized assumptions about what makes an ideal beauty student. Tutors position students within a deficit model. The 'typical' student is understood to be lacking in a number of respects. It is taken as given that she will be non-academic and will struggle with the small amount of written work demanded by the courses. However, being non-academic is not necessarily perceived as a problem, indeed it may even be considered an advantage. Beauty therapists are taken

to be ‘practical people’ and the education provided on the NVQ courses reinforces the practical/academic binary through which this is understood. There is scarcely any opportunity to develop critical or conceptual capacities or to deepen knowledge about the science involved in beauty practices. In this sense, the courses immobilize students’ horizons for action. Whilst practical skills are foregrounded by the curriculum and formal assessment criteria, the moulding of bodily and behavioural dispositions is the hidden curriculum which engages students and tutors in the work of producing of highly gendered and classed vocational dispositions. Predispositions to beauty practices- caring about and monitoring appearance- are, as far as tutors are concerned, the necessary raw material for producing a beauty therapist.

However, the task at hand is to transform the working class teenager into an aesthetic and emotional labourer and this involves “breaking down” aspects of her person. She is perceived to be too working class or vulgar in her appearance, too unrestrained in her manner, too focused on her own appearance and concerns, and unable to communicate ‘appropriately’. The process of ‘transformation’ is one that involves constant disciplinary surveillance of students in order to inculcate the ‘right’ bodily and emotional techniques to appeal to (middle class or aspiring) clients. Students must learn how to “look good and sound right” (Wolkowitz, 2006: 86). It is a requirement that they position themselves as *objects* of the gaze of others whilst simultaneously presenting themselves as caring ‘professionals’, as *subjects* of beauty culture. The way in which these idealized dispositions mirror the contradictions in contemporary constructions of femininity between ‘care of the self’ and ‘care of others’ underscores the paucity of cultural and economic capital contained in beauty therapy qualifications. Whilst some students will progress to Level 3 courses and enter low paid employment in salons, spas and on cruise liners, tutors expect that many, if not most, will use what they learn on their courses to be ‘better’ workers in routine part-time jobs outside the beauty industry, to supplement other sources of income, and to work ‘flexibly’ around the needs of children and male partners. In this sense, beauty therapy courses constitute a training ground for low waged and unpaid labour, and for normative, ‘respectable’ (hetero)femininity.

Transformations and Resistance

There is little doubt that the beauty therapy courses in this study 'transformed' students' dispositions, or at least promoted changes which were often subjectively experienced as positive and affirming. Students conceptualized this in terms of increased confidence and self-esteem. Whilst not wishing to underestimate the power and importance of this in the lives of these young women, such transformations entail costs. Success is only meaningful if the criteria on which it is recognized by others is accepted and internalized. When students develop dispositions and skills which more closely approximate to the dominant habitus of their courses they also more thoroughly embody the gendered and classed meanings and social relations underpinning beauty culture. For many participants, this meant an intensification of self-objectification. Though beauty practices may have been a central feature of their lives prior to joining the course, the quasi- rituals of skin care, legitimized through their association with professional knowledge and skills, were transported into their daily routines as a constant reminder of the body as a marker of identity and an unruly object requiring continual vigilance and work. For many students, being or becoming a beauty girl meant always having to 'look the part' and being continually under self-scrutiny and the scrutiny of others. For some, the incitement to 'propertize' the body as a form of capital was understood and embraced (though mostly ambivalently) as an inevitable part of the job. This view was held most strongly by those who had brought greater amounts of cultural capital to their courses in the first place and who were more able to incorporate this demand into their future-oriented biographies. In terms of the dominant habitus, these were the most 'successful' students, those who most 'comfortably' constructed their subjective experience of objectification as a form of capital.

In contrast, a minority of accounts emphasized the way in which this intense form of aesthetic labour had exacerbated low-self esteem and appearance-related anxieties. These were the students who often positioned themselves at a critical distance from beauty culture and whose accounts, more than those of other participants, signaled a habitus at odds with the field of beauty therapy, at least in terms of its aesthetic

dimensions. I interpret the anger of these students as the potential beginnings of a resistance to the paradox of femininity (the body –as- me and not- me) and as an embryonic refusal of the self-critical gaze which this splitting produces. This gaze is a pre-requisite of the critical gaze that beauty therapists are required to direct towards other women. Becoming a beauty therapist in this respect is caught up in the tensions associated with 'judging others'. In the context of the beauty therapy courses, the discourses of care, empathy and professionalism act as a form of symbolic violence which legitimizes this gaze, and disconnects it from its usual associations with 'bitchiness' and 'superficial' feminine competition. The increased self-confidence which most participants expressed towards the end of their courses was bound up with the way in which their existing dispositions to self-objectification, and sometimes to the care of others, were moulded by their courses into something that could be recognized and valued. The discourse of 'professionalism' offers the beauty girl a seductive and seemingly transcendent position as a 'subject of beauty culture'- one who's skills and knowledge have been lifted out of the realm of the everyday mundanity of femininity to be recognized as 'valuable' capital, if only in the local context of the training salon. For most beauty girls, being recognized as a 'skilled individual' was felt as powerful and transformative , but the sense of 'empowerment' is also a mechanism through which symbolic violence operates to integrate habitus into the hetero(gendered) and classed values of beauty culture and beauty therapy.

Findings in relation to research question 3

Networks of violence

Throughout this thesis, my analysis of participants' trajectories and experiences has been informed by the idea that when structural power relations and inequalities harm or violate life chances they are transformed into expressions of violence. On this basis, I have argued that beauty girls' journeys to and through their courses are enmeshed in networks of symbolic and other forms of violence. The structural/economic violence of

gender inequalities, sexual difference and classed power relations provide the objective limits within which 'choices' are made and identities are constructed, although these limits are often questioned and pushed against. Symbolic and direct expressions of violence mediate the ways in which structural violence is apprehended. Symbolic violence works in tandem with direct violence, as in the case of appearance related bullying, to exact compliance, however ambivalent, with dominant values. It also legitimizes the gendered and classed relations informing beauty therapy training. Discourses of professionalism, skills/knowledge, care and wellbeing obscure the disciplinary nature of the pedagogies and practices which aim to produce compliant, feminized service workers or at least 'respectable' (hetero)feminine subjectivities. The symbolic violence underlying the practices of beauty can exacerbate the profound suffering involved in inhabiting a body felt to be inferior or inadequate when measured against the idealized feminine body which is always invoked, though simultaneously denied, in the context of 'professional' beauty practice. Paradoxically, however, the experience of suffering can also produce critiques of beauty, lending weight to the idea that symbolic violence as internalized humiliation and inferiority may be the precondition of a critical consciousness. In this sense, symbolic violence by itself does not necessarily close down resistant agency. However, other forms of violence, most notably the structural/ economic violence that severely curtails access to other training and employment options, puts limits on how far critique can be developed. These limits are exacerbated by the censorship imposed within the 'field' of NVQ beauty training on alternative or critical views of beauty practices. Conversely, the operation of symbolic violence produces a sense of pleasure and 'empowerment' underscoring the way in which these subjective responses do not contradict power relations. Arguably, they dramatize the insidious nature of symbolic violence in 'reigning in the habitus' in to the dominant gendered and classed values of the 'field'.

I began this research project with the aim of using beauty therapy training as a basis for exploring the notion that beauty practices constitute a form of violence against women. In the process of research it became apparent that the harms caused by beauty could not be separated from the other injuries sustained by beauty girls in the process of

becoming women and emotional/aesthetic service workers. Their bodies, their feelings about them, and their attempts to produce feminine capital through them, are enmeshed in networks of gendered and classed power and violence. Appearance practices from make-up to dieting and the disciplinary regimes of 'professional' beauty to which they are subjected on their courses are vehicles through which interacting forms of violence become inscribed on the body and, to greater or lesser extents, embedded in subjectivity. When girls respond to the verbal assaults of bullying, or other intimations that they are not attractive enough, by compulsive dieting or other work on their appearance, the resulting physical and emotional transformations are manifestations of this violence. When students are required to display particular class inflected forms of 'respectable' femininity in order to appeal to clients, the 'look' that is produced is a bodily inscription of the symbolic violence involved in the disparagement of working class women. On their courses, students must continually engage in painful and sometimes damaging practices but the suffering involved in learning to create smooth, hairless skin is discounted or made invisible by discourses which naturalize bodily pain as a condition of femininity. Becoming a 'professional' beauty therapist requires a particularly hyper-feminine embodiment of pain and the direct interpersonal or intrapersonal violence through which it is inflicted. The connection between this pain and the heterosexualized nature of beauty practices is dramatized when beauty girls are made to perform practices which produce the feminine body according to ideals inspired by pornographic representations. Bikini waxing, perhaps more overtly than other practices, requires students to learn to experience their own bodies as sexual territory. At the same time, one of the most insidious expressions of symbolic violence is exercised through the discourse of beauty as female wellbeing which both normalizes and disavows the sexual nature of this practice and the gendered violence implicit in it.

Contributions to knowledge

This thesis makes three contributions to knowledge. Firstly, beauty therapy has been almost entirely absent from the literature on vocational education and training in the UK.

Research on post-16 choices and the production of girls' vocational dispositions has tended to concentrate on care-related courses, their reliance on predispositions to caring for others and their production of vocational identities organized around the 'caring self'. In focusing on the neglected area of beauty therapy, this research emphasizes the possibility that feminine pre-dispositions based on appearance or 'care of the self' may be equally important in guiding girls towards training and employment. Though beauty therapy is an obvious example, girls' identification with their bodies may play a role in shaping their horizons for action more generally. This may suggest an avenue for future research.

Secondly, empirical research on the operation of different forms of violence in social life has tended either to focus on the way in which symbolic violence accompanies or precedes direct forms of domestic (Morgan and Bjorkert, 2010), sexual (Coy, 2011) or political (Bourgios, 2001) violence, or has been concerned with the operation of symbolic or other forms of violence in institutional settings (Osler, 2006; Herr &Anderson, 2003). Whilst the thesis draws on this research and covers some of the same ground, one of its points of departure is its focus on practices which are popularly understood in terms of individual choice, expression and pleasure. In positioning beauty practices within networks of violence, this research points to the importance of attending to the operation of violence where direct physical assaults or other types of direct interpersonal coercion may be significant factors but not necessarily the most salient ones. In addition, in contrast to previous research which has mainly explored the intersections of violence in relation to specific situations, this thesis has pointed to the way in which violence may operate across trajectories from childhood to further education. However, my research has relied entirely on retrospective accounts of childhood and early teenage experience. Future research using more expansive longitudinal time frames might be useful in exploring how different forms of violence may have cumulative effects over the life course of individuals and groups.

Thirdly, this thesis contributes to our understanding of how beauty practices might be involved in violence against women. It extends Jeffrey's conception of beauty as a

harmful cultural practice by pointing to the way in which beauty practices across the continuum from less to more physically harmful forms inscribe gendered and classed violence on the bodies of girls and women, and to the way in which symbolic violence works through beauty practices to embed those forms of violence in feminine subjectivity.

Policy implications

Policies informing careers guidance and post-16 transitions assume that young people make, or should make, reflexive choices on the basis of interests and inclinations which are tacitly held to be non-problematic. In ignoring the structural factors which affect life chances, and in promoting the idea that young people should follow their personal 'skills' and interests, these policies leave young people to be guided by a sense of limits which may be produced by inequality and injustice. Deprived of other options, or sometimes despite them, some girls follow their inclinations to enter beauty therapy courses. In so doing, they are placed in a 'field' which not only reproduces gendered and classed inequalities but also imposes profound constraints on their ability to develop a critical consciousness of gendered and classed stereotypes or to construct horizons for action less tightly bound by them. This research may provide some support for Colley's suggestion that advice and guidance processes should provide space for young people to critically reflect on "why they desire the destinies they pursue" (Colley, 2006: 27).

Reflections on the research process

Although I have attempted to understand participants' trajectories by exploring their viewpoints, "hidden knowledges…resistances [and]…entrapping 'decisions'" (Willis, 1981: 201), I am aware that my research could be accused of lacking ethnographic depth. With hindsight, focusing on one group of students in one college might have allowed for a more intense immersion in the lives of the beauty girls. It would certainly

have dispensed with the complicated negotiations involved in timetabling visits to two colleges and this may have freed up time for more informal conversations and greater participation in the daily college lives of students and tutors. Though interviews and focus groups facilitated access to information on multiple aspects of the lives of students in the core group, having more time to establish greater familiarity and reciprocity may have yielded a more in -depth understanding of the production of shared meanings, contradictions and resistances, and of key issues such as family and friendship networks.

Broadening out my original focus on beauty practices and violence has entailed coverage of a broad range of issues. The thesis thus reveals the complexities involved in the production of young women's subjectivities, though I acknowledge that the analysis may at times appear a little dense to the reader. However, I justify this on the grounds that it was necessary in order to elucidate the range of social and cultural practices in which beauty girls' dispositions are constructed, and in order to make connections between some of the different social and institutional contexts- family, school, peer relationships, educational policy, further education, the labour market, cultural sexualization, the beauty industry- through which the heterogendered and classed constraints on their trajectories are produced.

In demonstrating how these contexts generate and reproduce networks of violence and how different forms of violence are inscribed on women's bodies and embedded in subjectivity, this study contributes to the broadening out of feminist understandings of violence against women and points to the importance of non-direct forms of violence in reproducing gendered power relations.

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Appendix 1: Course Content for NVQ 1 and 2 Beauty Therapy

The Beauty Therapy courses at both colleges have a similar content. The tables below indicate the main elements of these courses.

NVQ 1
Facials
Nail Art
Manicures
Pedicures
Communication Skills (Literacy and IT)
Health and Safety
Reception Duties –customer service skills
Tutorials

NVQ 2
Facials and facial treatments e.g. steaming
Manicures
Make-up, facial analysis and corrective make-up
Waxing –facial, legs, underarm, bikini
Eye-brow shaping and tinting, eyelash tinting
Massage
Anatomy and Physiology (A & P)
Health and Safety
Communications (Literacy and IT)

Appendix 2: Letter to College Heads of Department

Name
Head of Division/Department

Dear

I am a PhD student at the University of Bristol and am undertaking research into why young women choose beauty therapy as a training and career option and their experiences on these courses. This includes exploring how students on beauty therapy courses learn the skills and behaviours necessary to become professionals in this field, and how the courses help shape their aspirations for the future.

I am hoping to conduct research with students and staff on beauty therapy courses in FE colleges in the south west of England between April 2009 and July 2010 and would very much like to include X College in the study. The research will involve some interviews, focus groups and informal meetings. However, I am well aware of how busy staff and students are (I have worked as a lecturer and manager in FE colleges for 16 years) and the research schedule would be negotiated to fit around the schedules of staff and students. The findings of the research may be of interest to staff and I will be very happy to share them with the faculty.

Confidentiality with respect to the identities of the college and participating students and staff will be maintained. Pseudonyms will be used in all documentation and communication regarding this research project and all the information collected during the study will be stored securely and treated as strictly confidential.

If you think your students and staff might be able to participate in this project I would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact me on…….

If you would like to contact my supervisors to reassure yourself that this is a genuine research project, please email either……

I very much look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Mandy Kidd
Graduate School of Education/Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Law
University of Bristol

Appendix 3: Consent form- Focus groups

Dear students

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this discussion. Your contribution is very valuable.

The issues we discuss may be used in research reports but your name, your course, your college and the names of anyone connected to you or your course are confidential and will not be used in any report or discussed outside of group.

The discussion will last for about 45 minutes to 1 hour. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to participate, that's fine. You can leave the discussion at any time.

Thank you again for your participation.

……

I would like to participate in the research and agree to participate in the discussion. I understand that the issues discussed in the interview may be used in reports but that all personal details will be kept strictly confidential.

Name: Signed:

Appendix 4: Consent letter/form - student interviews

Dear student [Name]

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project. Your contribution is very valuable.

I am a research student at The University of Bristol and the subject of my research is why young people choose to train for careers in the beauty industry and their experiences of this training.

I am interested to hear your views and feelings about **anything** to do with beauty therapy, your course and why you decided to do it, your interests and your ambitions or anything else you think is relevant.

The issues we discuss may be used in research reports but your name, your course, your college and the names of anyone connected to you or your course are confidential and will not be used in any report or discussed outside of the interview. All the information collected during the study will be stored securely and treated as strictly confidential. After transcribing the interview, the recording will be deleted.

The interview will last for about 45 minutes to 1 hour. If at any time you decide not to continue, that's fine. We can end the interview at any time.

Thank you again for your participation.

Mandy Kidd
University of Bristol
Tel:
Email:

I would like to participate in the research and agree to be interviewed. I understand that the issues discussed in the interview may be used in reports but that all personal details will be kept strictly confidential.

Signed

Date

Appendix 5: Consent form - tutor interviews

Dear [Name]

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project. Your contribution is very valuable.

I am a research student at The University of Bristol and the subject of my research is why young people choose to train for careers in the beauty industry and their experiences of this training.

I am interested to hear your views and feelings about **anything** to do with beauty therapy, the programmes in your area, your experience of working on them and anything else you think is relevant.

The issues we discuss may be used in research reports but your name, your college and the names of anyone connected to you or the college are confidential and will not be used in any report or discussed outside of the interview.

The interview will last for about 45 minutes to 1 hour. If at any time you decide not to continue, that's fine. You can end the interview at any time.

Thank you again for your participation.

Mandy Kidd
University of Bristol
Tel:
Email:

I would like to participate in the research and agree to be interviewed. I understand that the issues discussed in the interview may be used in reports but that all personal details will be kept strictly confidential.

Signed

Date

Appendix 6: Student interview schedule round 1

Preliminary question

How is the course going for you at the moment?

Topics and prompts

1. Influences and interests

Can you tell me something about why you think you decided to do beauty therapy at college?

- Other options? What and why?
- People who have influenced you in making decisions about courses?

Can you tell me something about your memories of first learning about or being interested in make-up, nails etc (things to do with appearance)?

- Anyone you particularly learnt from/were influenced by?
- Kids' make up/beauty-related play ? Who with? Feelings about this at the time?
- When first bought own adult beauty products? What were these?
- Visiting beauty salons/having treatments? Who with? Feelings about this at the time?

School

Can you tell me something about how school was for you?

- Likes/dislikes/subjects
- Teachers
- Friends- who did you spend most time with?
- Help with choosing courses/jobs at 16? Feelings about this.

Can you tell me something about what you and your friends felt about make-up, nails, hair, clothes etc (things to do with appearance) when you were at school?

- How important? If important, why?
- Appearance at school?
- Appearance outside school?
- How important type of clothes worn in/outside school? Why?

What sort of activities did you do outside of school? Who with?

Parents and siblings and wider family

Can you tell me something about your family/people you were around when you growing up?

- Who close to? Who most influenced by?
- Parents/carers/aunts/uncles' jobs?
- Siblings/cousins' jobs/courses?
- Did you think about doing same sorts of jobs?

- What family think about your choice of course?
- Any family members/friends work in BT type jobs?

Other important people

Can you tell me something about any other people who are or have been important in your life?

- Friends? From school/other?
- Partner/boyfriend?
- What jobs/courses do these people do?
- Their views of your choice?

Work/Interests/activities outside college

Can you tell be something about work and other things you do outside of college?

- Paid/other work? Feelings about this? If in Salon, how does it compare to college?
- Other interests/activities? Who with?
- Things you would like to do but don't? Why?
- Recent experience of going to beauty salons/doing nails/make-up/hair?

2. Experience of the course

Can you tell me about more about how you feel/what you think about the course?

- Likes/dislikes/interesting/boring aspects?
- Feelings about staff?
- How would you change course?

Can you tell me something about how you get on with the other students/your friendships with other students on the course?

- Mostly/only girls- feelings about this?

Can you tell me something about your thoughts and feelings about having and giving treatments?

- What do you like/ dislike doing?
- How feel about giving and receiving treatments with other students?
- Feelings about treating outside clients? Men/women?
- Practice treatments outside of the course? On who? Where?

Impact of course on self-perceptions/perceptions of others/aspirations

Do you think doing the course has changed how you feel about yourself/see yourself? (in good or bad ways?)

- E.g. Self-confidence?
- E.g. The way you feel about your appearance or other people's appearance?

Can you describe your usual beauty routine – what do you do each college day/other week day /weekends/going out in evening?

Has doing the course changed your routine/time taken? How?

If yes, how do you feel about this?

Has the course changed what you think you might do in the future? How?

What can you see yourself doing in 2/5 years time?

- Work/home life?

3. Advantage/ Disadvantage and inequality in education/life

Do you think you've faced any barriers or unfair treatment in any aspect of your life so far?

- If yes, how dealt with?

Do you think you have had advantages because of who you are?

Do you think being a girl rather than a boy has affected your life in any way?

Why do you think beauty therapy courses are so popular with young women ?

- Why are there so few boys/men on BT courses?
- Should boys/men be encouraged to do BT courses? How?
- Why are there so few women on courses like car mechanics or construction?
- Should women be encouraged to do these courses/jobs. How?
- Would you be interested in doing a job like this? Why/why not?
- Do you know any women doing male dominated jobs?

Closing questions

What does the word 'beauty' mean to you?

How would you explain what being a beauty therapist is about to a school leaver who I is interested but doesn't know much about it?

Thanks and close

.

Appendix 7: Example of round 2 interview schedule

General Questions

- How's the course going? How do you feel about it?

Photographs

Ask Louisa to look through them and display as she wants

- Who took the photos of you?
- Other people in the photos?- tell me about them and what's happening in the photos.
- Bedroom posters? Tell me about them? What do they mean to you?
- Which of these photos of you do you most like/which least? Why?
- You seem to pretty happy in these photos-is this true mostly?
- What kinds of people do you think seem to feel confident/happy about the way they look?
- What kinds of people tend to feel unhappy about the way they look?
- Do you think it's the same or different for girls and boys?
- Do you think most people on your course have a positive or negative self image?
- Do you think being on the course affects how people feel about themselves? Has it changed how you feel about yourself?
- Has the course changed your beauty routines? What do you do differently?

Things in phiots

- **Kerrang**!- do you read this? What do you like about it? Peroxide Pandora cartoon? (show her some images- what do you think of these?)
- **CDs/Music**- What do you like/dislike?
- **Computer and games**. What are you doing in this photo (computer on lap)? Who do you play games with?
- **Makeup and hair straighteners etc**. Do you own more stuff since starting on courses? Do you do make-up hair etc with friends? What's most important to you in all this stuff and why?
- **Tell me about you clothes**: favourite/ which you most/least like wearing and why?
- Whose opinion is important to you about what you look like?

Other

- Cat
- Cartoon cat- who/what is this? Why this photo?.
- When we last met you said your mum was starting a job?. Has this happened? What effect on you?

The course

- What have been the most rewarding things about doing the course this year? What are the worst things?
- What skills have you learnt?
- In the last interview you said you were mainly interested in massage, are you still?/other interests developed?
- What would you say have been the hardest bits of the course/which the easiest? Why?
- How have the tutors helped you/not been helpful?

Concluding

- Are you still planning to do Level 2?
- What are you most/least looking forward to on the level 2 course?
- What are your hopes or fears for the future - jobs and money or other things?
- When you finish at college, if you could do anything you dream of besides massage, what would it be?

Thanks and close

Appendix 8: Tutor Interview schedule

Your background

1. Can you give me an overview of your current job?
2. Can you tell me briefly about your own background and your route to this job?

The students

1. Why do you think girls/young women are attracted to beauty therapy courses? What kind of young women?
2. How do you select students? Who gets rejected and why?
3. What would you say is the ideal beauty student?
4. What else do students need to succeed on the courses? What types of student tend not to succeed?
5. Do you find that students come to the course with some of the skills/knowledge already there? Does this help?
6. Across colleges, some very strong friendships developed between girls/young women but also some conflict? What is this mainly about? What do you do to address it?
7. All girls this year. Why? Is this seen as an issue in the college/ department?

The course

1. What do students tend to find the hardest aspect of the course? Why? How do you address this?
   (Why do many students seem to like theory less than practical work? Is there any way of making theory more appealing?)
2. How important are literacy and numeracy skills? How are these taught?
3. What advice and guidance provision is there for student progression (to industry/other alternative training/HE)?
4. Some students (across the colleges) have had bad experiences with clients as well as very good. Is there a worry that it might put students off?

5. There has been some criticism of the beauty and fashion industries for selling unrealistic ideas of what women should look like. Are these issues discussed with students? How aware do you think students are of these issues?
6. How are equalities/equal opportunities issues addressed on the course?

The industry

1. What level qualifications are needed to work in the industry?
2. How easy is it for today's students to find work in the industry? Has the recession had an impact?
3. How many students typically go into the industry? What areas? What happens to those who don't?

4. A lot of students seem to want to run their own businesses. How does the course prepare them for this?

General

1. What changes have you seen in what students and clients think is an acceptable appearance?
2. `What would you say is the most rewarding aspect of teaching on this programme? What the least rewarding/difficult?

Other possible Qs if time

1. Can you tell me something about your own training as a beauty therapist and how it differed from today's training programmes at FE colleges?
2. What made you decide to train as a beauty therapist? Influences?
3. Can you tell me something about your experiences in the industry and your how you think the industry has changed?

Appendix 9: Focus group schedule 1

Preparation

1. Power point set up
2. Pens and post-its
3. Consent forms
4. Flip chart/whiteboard markers

Introduction

1. Welcome and thanks. Introduce self and research
2. Overview of topic for group- get to know you, your views on beauty therapy and other things.
3. Idea of focus group. Me facilitator, you talking to each other. Feel free to say what you think and feel. No right or wrong.
4. Consent forms/ethics
5. Ground rules

Topic Guide

Topic 1

Introductory questions

How is the course going?
What do you most like?
What do you least like?

Topic 2

Students consider images of women

1. Young women dressed up
2. Woman on yacht (Ellen McCarther)
3. Women dancing
4. Women playing rugby
5. Woman body builder
6. Woman working in construction
7. Woman doing pedicure on man (Jade Goody)
8. International Women's day

A. Power point images. For each one:

a) What is your first reaction? What does image make you feel/think?
b) How would you describe this person? Personality, likes/dislikes, appearance?
c) For each scene, would you feel comfortable in it?

B. Give out handouts with images

a) Which of these scenes would you feel most comfortable in? Why?
b) Which of these scenes would you feel least comfortable in? Why?

Topic 3.

What makes people want to do beauty therapy courses?
Small groups. Write down any reasons you can think of- your own reasons and other peoples

Prompts:
1. What kinds of people?
2. What is the attraction of beauty therapy?
3. Why is it mostly women?

Feedback

Close and thanks.

Appendix 10: Identification of a theme and its connections- 'Shame and Stigma'

Extract from a first round student interview

Mandy : Do you remember when you first started being interested, having any kind of interest in appearance and hair and makeup and that kind of thing?

Jenna: Erm, I think it was properly when I had my prom [pause] like because I was all dressed up and I had all my makeup done and I had hair extensions and my hair was beautiful. And I think from that day I looked so pretty that day but then I can never look like that again and, I look at myself in other pictures and I think I really used to take time in doing my hair and my makeup. Now I just can't be bothered. I just [pause] I don't have the thing in my head saying "Oh yeah, I'm going to make myself look pretty today, gonna do my hair and makeup". I don't care if I wake up in the morning and my hair's a mess and I've got to go out.

Comment [U1]: Ideal self. Transformation

Comment [U2]: Precariousness of being attractive. Shame/stigma of failure

M: What about coming into college then?

J: In college, I still, like, I just bung my hair back and I mean, this morning I took time because I had a bath last night and my hair was soft so I thought, oh, I'll straighten it. Like, but usually I'll just stick it up .

M:Okay, alright.

J: I just like…I, I, just feel like I want to … I want to feel beautiful. I look at all the girls and I think "oh you're absolutely stunning". And people tell me I'm stunning and I'm like "No I'm not, why are you lying to me?" Like,I … oh, it's so annoying; I'm just … I'm attracting all this … like, I'm a magnet but I'm the negative magnet and things are coming towards me but I'm pushing it away all the time [laughs].

Comment [U3]: Comparison of self with idealized femininity

Comment [U4]: Targeting of body/self

M: Tell me something about school and what that was like for you?

J: I was bullied all the way through school. I don't really concentrate because I was always thinking about friends. I wanted to make friends. So I started smoking when I was young, in secondary school [deep breath] and I've smoked ever since. I regret it [laughs]. Erm, and I was always, I was always the piggy in the middle [sighs]. Like, I was always the one, always there for people when they needed me. Like, say if they'd fallen out with someone they'd always be with me, "Oh there's the second best now". And I tried my hardest at being sort of good friends.

M: Ok

J: Yeah, and like I done a talent show. This is the most horribleist thing that ever happened. I done a talent show with my two friends and my sister. And we were doing a dance and I sort of choreographed it, and it was a really good dance and er, they'd had Christmas crackers and we were on the stage and there's the assembly and the people were chanting "Crusty" at me [pause] because of my skin and they were calling me "Granville" and everything else. They were like, "Granville, Granville" and chucking stuff at me.

M: Oh no, right. This was school kids?

J: Yeah.

M: What did the teachers do?

J: Nothing. And like, I was like dancing and they just targeted me, and there was three others on the stage but everything was coming my way and I, but I carried out the whole dance. I did not give up. I Done it all and then when I finished the dance I left the stage so that I could show them I don't care about that, but, it did kill me. Honestly, it absolutely embarrassed me. I felt so degraded. And, like that's…. [inaudible]….I did beauty because I wanted to be, I wanted to have more and be able to take care of my skin and get back to normal. I don't feel normal. I feel like an odd person [laughs] with depression, crusty skin and [laughs]. You know, that's why I don't feel beautiful in myself, like, and like with my phantom pregnancy causing stretch marks and, and I was size six. I was tiny when, before I had this phantom pregnancy and now I just feel fat. I feel like blubber. I feel like I've got stretch marks and crusty skin [laughs].

Comment [U5]: Peer violence and academic self-exclusion

Comment [U6]: Self-transformation to fit in

Comment [U7]: Sacrifice. Being -for -others

Comment [U8]: Critical incident instilling shame

Comment [U9]: Peer violence. Stigmatization. Being-perceived

Comment [U10]: Targeting of body/self.

Comment [U11]: Resistance

Comment [U12]: Stigma/violence embodied

Comment [U13]: Care of self

Comment [U14]: Desire for self-transformation/normality.

Comment [U15]: Self-disgust. Bodily alienation.